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# LAND SHARKS

AND

# SEA GULLS.

BY

CAPTAIN GLASCOCK, R. N.

AUTHOR OF THE "NAVAL SKETCH BOOK,"  
"TALES OF A TAR," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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**LAND SHARKS**

**AND**

**SEA GULLS.**

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**BOOK III.**

**THE MAN-OF-WAR.**

**"Behold a stately ship,  
Proud of her gaudy trim, comes this way sailing,  
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,  
Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,  
Courtied by all the winds."**

**MILTON.**

## BOOK III.

### THE MAN-OF-WAR.

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#### CHAPTER I.

“For what’s more miserable than discontent !”

SHAKESPEARE.

“What can prevent our supremacy at sea, when it is well known there is not a youth in the kingdom who is not ambitious to take upon him the *honour* and the hazard of a midshipman’s life ?”

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES, 1799.

SINCE the adventure detailed in the conclusion of our last book, nothing particular occurred connected with the fortunes of Mr. Waddy, or Mrs. Waddy, or young Darcy, or the Jewess, worthy of being recorded in this history; except, indeed, the increasing discontent of the parties may claim to be chronicled. But in discontent there is nothing capable of imparting much interest: it is a dull, insipid, undramatic quality; and, accordingly, we have allowed ten years passed under its influence to transpire, without troubling our pen to trace a single line connected with them. Waddy was discontented with his admirable wife, because she had convicted him of fraud (moral fraud, if not legal) in the trick by the agency of which she was induced to marry him; and Mrs. Waddy was discontented with him for precisely the same reason. Young Darcy was discontented with his step-father, simply because he was a vulgar fellow; and, as the youth had the blood of an Irish gentleman in his veins, it was

impossible that he could ever respect a cockney lawyer. Poor Elizabeth was discontented, inasmuch as, since the disappearance of Mordaunt, and the death of Bobson, she thought she could not make any adequate return for the protection and kindness bestowed on her by Mrs. Waddy, as if the putting Mordaunt *hors de combat* was not a service meriting unbounded and substantial gratitude.

We have said that no incident worthy of commemoration occurred during the above-named period; for we can hardly deem it necessary to relate that which the reader has no doubt long ago foreseen, namely, the recovery of Mrs. Waddy's property. The fact is, that within a month or two after his marriage, Waddy brought his action against the transgressors, who, without even suffering the case to go into court, yielded up their ill-gotten gains to the astute and victorious lawyer. This quiet restitution was in a great measure attributable to Mordaunt's absence: had he not been driven away from the scene by the adroitness and presence of mind of the Jewess, there is no saying how he might have defended the action, nor, in order to pervert justice, to what subornation and perjury he might have had recourse.

During the wearying months and years which succeeded her ill-assorted union with the barrister, Mrs. Waddy found occasional relief in the society of an excellent clergyman of the name of Lawrence. This gentleman was a friend of her former husband, and, had he been in "orders" when she was about to be married, would have been the minister selected to perform the ceremony.

At this period of our story Mr. Lawrence was about three-and-thirty years of age. He had been ordained when only twenty-three; but having no interest either in court, parliament, or church, he had languished some years in a humble cure, the revenue of which did not much exceed £80 per annum. This pitiful income he had eked out by undertaking the education of a few private pupils; but tutoring boys accorded little with his taste. A man can't joke with children, and joking was necessary to Mr. Lawrence's existence. Not that the wit and *humour* which the reverend gentleman possessed in an *eminent degree* were ever exercised to give pain to mor-

tal; but he abhorred a sedentary life, and therefore gave up his cure and his tutorage, and became a chaplain in his Majesty's Navy, where his character, perpetual cheerfulness, and well-timed jests (added, it must be confessed, to his personal qualifications, for he stood six feet high in his shoes, had the strength of Hercules, and, in a good cause, feared neither man, beast, nor devil) made him a universal favourite,—an estimate of his qualities which was as general ashore as afloat. Every body loved Mr. Lawrence—every body (we don't mean to rhyme) but Mr. Waddy.

Frequent conversations had transpired between Mr. and Mrs. Waddy on the choice of a profession for young Darcy. But there was little or no coincidence in their several views on the subject. Waddy, with a true *esprit de corps*, was for bringing the youth up to the bar,—a profession which, it is superfluous to state, was cordially detested by his wife. She did not, indeed, give Waddy her reasons for this aversion, though the reader will be at no loss to divine them.

"You must be aware, Mr. Waddy," said she one day to her husband, "that the settlement of my boy in life has often been a subject of anxious meditation with me. You know, moreover, that I am not partial to the law; neither, let me add, do I much affect the other learned professions. In this indecision I have applied for counsel to my excellent friend Mr. Lawrence, and he ——"

"Mr. Lawrence! Mr. Lawrence! Am I never to hear the last of his name?" interrupted the Barrister, petulantly. "I wish Mr. Lawrence were again fairly afloat, attending to the care of the sailors' souls, instead of teasing me with his jokes and his impertinent advice. To speak plainly, Mrs. Waddy, I don't think it altogether becomes you, as a married lady, to give so much time, and pay so much attention to a bachelor, as you do to this Mr. Lawrence!"

Mrs. Waddy cast at her husband a look of ineffable scorn; but her spirit was too proud to enter into an altercation with him further than by merely saying,

"I think, sir, to revert to the mode of life to be adopted by my son, you will not dispute my right to be sole arbiter of that point."







vote the Nonsuch was retained on the "Home station," and was usually attached to the Channel fleet.

Determined to enjoy to the fullest extent the several privileges peculiar to Parliamentary men, Sir Montague, when the "House was sitting," was sure to be the first, and often the last, seen in his political place. To him the proud privilege of remaining covered, wearing his hat in the presence of a professional superior, was, to use his own clap-trap electioneering language, "a delicious exercise of political prerogative; a glorious manifestation of British independence;" and yet no servile hunter after place more sedulously sought the minister's smile, or more deeply dreaded the "First Lord's" official frown.

But of all the personal privileges extended to the framers and legislators of the laws of the land, there was none of which the Captain of the Nonsuch so much availed himself, or more constantly enjoyed, than that which, when indulged afloat, was "*Death* by the Articles of War."

Sheltered, however, in the Senate, and absolved from the penal severity of that Act of Parliament which affects the lives of His Majesty's liege subjects when serving afloat, the Parliamentary act of sleeping on his post was deeply indulged by the honourable Baronet night after night; and for hours and hours on the "*Stretch*," did the gallant legislator enjoy his constitutional somnolency on the ministerial side of the back benches of St. Stephen's. Not that, when awake, Sir Montague was aught of a listener. Seldom was he cognisant of the business in debate; and invariably, upon the discussion of professional topics, were his lips hermetically sealed. Indeed, upon maritime matters, he was wont to manifest a talent for taciturnity seldom surpassed by senatorial tars.

Never during a parliamentary career of six years had his sweet voice been heard in the Senate, save on one occasion, when he started from a troubled dream, and vociferated "question! question!" though, in fact, no question happened to be before the House. And yet when afloat, and disposed to be communicative, the Baronet's "table-talk" seldom diverged into any other topic than that of his "contemplated motion." So constantly, indeed, was this made the theme of conversation

at dinner, that in the cockpit it went by no other name than the "Skipper's *perpetual motion*."

But dumb or drowsy, mute or motionless, the Baronet's vote was voted a matter of political import; and therefore, as regularly as Parliament met for the despatch of business, so regularly was an acting, and by some considered a *too* active, Captain despatched by the Admiralty, to release the legislator of the land from his *less* serviceable duties at sea.

In this diplomatic manœuvre a double purpose was effected. The Minister secured Sir Montague's "ay;" and the "Board," not of "green" but of blue cloth, in appointing an officer who never permitted the monosyllable "*no*" to stand in the light of their Lordships' will, attained its end, by having invariably revived the discipline, which on board the *Nonsuch*, when under Sir Montague's immediate command, seemed under great danger of decay. In short by this public act of private accommodation, the "State" and the "Service" were both benefited.

But to affairs afloat.

The *Nonsuch* was now at sea, and attached to the fleet then employed upon the dull, dispiriting, and even harassing service of blockading the enemy's ships in the port of Brest.

From unavoidable circumstances connected with nautical prudence, the ships composing the main body of the Channel fleet seldom approached within sight of the enemy's coast. The eye rarely caught a glance of the Gallic land. The flags of "*la belle France*," (ensigns of enormous size) which, at each peak,

"Mock'd the air with colours *idly* spread,"

together with the long, swaggering, broad-headed pen'ants displayed at the main-royal truck of each of Napoleon's pet frigates, and port-protected battle ships, spell-ridden in the sheltered and unruffled waters of Brest, were tantalising sights seldom afforded to the blue-water tars of "*Billy Blue*."\*

On the one side of the bleak and sterile island of Ushant ("*You-sha'n't*," as pronounced, or rather denounced by

\* The nickname of Admiral Corwallis.

the wags of the fleet,) and on the other, the rugged and treacherous rocks of the "*Saints*," were not, when the wind was in the prevailing quarter, (that is to say, nine months out of the twelve,) the most enticing localities for the proximate approach of a fleet, which was too often to be seen, from a paucity of stores, provisions and water, in the pleasing predicament of buffeting the seas "flying light." In short, the line of coast in the vicinity of Brest, which, with a south-westerly wind, became to the ships of the Channel fleet a lee shore,\* might not inaptly be compared to the official office which the stern and strutting lieutenant, pacing the weather side of the quarter deck, was wont to maintain, with the sullen and crawling mid shivering to leeward. The rocks, like the "roofers," were kept at a respectful and respectable distance.

Having, contrary to custom, resumed the command of his ship some three weeks prior to the prorogation of parliament, the nocturnal slumbers of the honourable member were subject to interruptions, which were never experienced at his political post. The heavy tramp of the after-guard, marines, and the mizen topman, running from side to side on the poop, and the perpetual din of brails, braces, and running ropes dropping on the deck overhead, were sounds little calculated to favour sleep. The cabin of the Nonsuch was not like the "chamber" of the Commons. Like the lullaby of the cradled babe, Sir Montague, in his disturbed slumbers, had already missed the soothing cheers of "Honourable and Right Honourable Gentlemen;" for, in those days, the "hear! hear!" of the "House" seldom distracted the *hearing* of those "awake to their work," or disturbed the personal repose of the stretched senator. Shrill screams, harsh brayings, and cock-crowings, were not then resorted to by pulmonary statesmen, as popular manifestations of party triumph.

\* The efficacy of the system pursued in blockading the enemy's fleet, securely and comfortably sheltered in the strongly fortified anchorage of Brest, depended mainly—indeed, we may say, solely—upon the nerve, ability, and ever-vigilant look-out, displayed by the officers commanding the "small craft," attached to the in-shore squadron. The onerous duties, and awfully responsible trust, confided to the  *crews of the "Black Rocks," the Lapenotieres of the Paroquet, the men of the "Bay," and the Scriveners of the "Saints," were never,acial folk, sufficiently appreciated.*

But to leave the order of speaking for the "order of sailing."

The Nonsuch was stationed the sternmost ship in the lee line—the whipper-in of the column. In this position, when not detached from the fleet, on some such temporary service as that of repeating signals, or carrying on a colloquy between the commander-in-chief and the senior officer of the In-shore squadron, the Nonsuch might be seen, under low and comparatively small show of canvas, affecting to preserve her station in the line, and her vaunted reputation as "Flyer of the fleet." In the phraseology of "Jack,"—cutting a dirty caper, with either her mizen-topsail aback, or the lee-clue of her foresail hauled up, to keep astern of a station, already too far astern.

It was in this position of sailing, that the several crews pertaining to the ships of the fleet were, for a few seconds, seen swarming on the topsail yards, which had all been suddenly and simultaneously lowered. To the eye of the spectator was presented the spirit-stirring scene of two and twenty sail of the line reefing topsails precisely at the same interval of time—the *exact* moment—and in each ship might be seen the many-handed mass gathering up the reef-bands of the coarse canvass, and tying round the huge yards with marvellous rapidity of finger the numerous platted points which were to reduce the several sails to the desired reef.

The celerity of limb, mind, and muscle manifested by the scamen of the fleet, when competing with each other in the execution of this exciting evolution, exceeded belief. The eye could hardly give credence to the work it witnessed. Sixty seconds for the ships of the fleet to "take in a reef together" was considered a protracted period. But, in those endearing days, the "march of intellect" had not benumbed the minds nor stiffened the muscles of His Majesty's long-tailed tars.

In exercising the fleet in these and other evolutions aloft, (we like to be minute in nautical matters, now that the ladies and *litterati* of the land descant upon the merits of naval novels; pore over "Tales of the Sea;" pant over incidents and delineations of life afloat, which, in graphic fidelity, verisimilitude of scene, characteristic *touches of the tar*, and, above all, the well-known senti-

*mentality* of the seamen of the Service, have never been exceeded, no, not even in the melo-dramatic waters of *Sadler's Wells*.) in exercising, we say, the fleet, in all evolutions aloft, the precise time at which to commence the movement was indicated by a preparatory signal from the ship which bore the flag of the commander-in-chief. In military language (for *sager* phrases are now extravagantly in vogue afloat) the flag became *fugle* to the fleet.

In these animating and stirring competitions, everything depended upon the eye deputed to watch the preparatory signal, and catch the first blush of the bunting which was to set into rapid and emulative motion the thousands of feet afloat. In the hurried and rapid run from the lower deck to the topmost shrouds of ships of the line, odds were not to be given; and in resting the limbs and lungs of the competing tars, little of time was allowed or lost. Though only for a few seconds, the lack of lookout was sure to produce defeat, if not cause discomfiture to the crew of the vessel late, or last, in descrying the admiral's evolutionary signal.

Now of the multifarious mishaps and "misdemeanors committed on the high seas," (and afloat, where morals are happily mended, and manners specifically taught, the catalogue of crime becomes necessarily extended,) that of the "blind look out" was the last which, in his clemency, Lieutenant Leatherlungs was disposed to overlook.

In "reefing together," the Nonsuch had been beaten, and, in the language of the first lieutenant, "shamefully beaten by every ship in the fleet;" and therefore it was that he was determined to punish the delinquent who had brought upon the ship such signal disgrace.

The defaulter was soon detected. The startling hail which had been addressed, or rather directed to the main-top, had already produced his descent upon deck.

"Pray, Mr. Darcy," interrogated the first lieutenant, looking daggers at the agitated youth, as he now, with drooping head and hand to hat, stood before his rough and rigorous superior, "pray, sir, how came you to be entrusted to look-out on the admiral, oh?"

"Mr. Fuller, sir, asked me to relieve him to his coffee," replied the youngster in a timid tone.

"He did, did he! Where's Mr. Fuller?" vociferated the first lieutenant.

Mr. Fuller, who answered to the calling, but who fulfilled indifferently the vigilant and active duties which devolve on the signal midshipman of the watch, had, previously to the evolution of reefing, been panting upon the poop for his treacle-sweetened allowance of *pea*-coffee, which he had been twice told by the dirty-faced, flour-bedaubed domestic of the midshipmen's mess, had been long cooling in the cockpit.

"Where's Mr. Fuller?" again roared the first lieutenant.

"Here I am, sir," responded the cooper-blue-and-yellow pacer of the poop, who already felt he was about to get, what the cockpitonians then termed, "cocoa for his coffee."

"Up to the foretopmast-head, sir!" said the angry 'First,' "and there remain till ordered down."

With slow and unwilling foot Fuller proceeded aloft.

"And how came you not to see the signal for reefing, eh, sir?" continued Leatherlungs, turning to the younger delinquent. The admiral's men were all aloft before a man of ours had started from the deck."

The trembling lad remained mute. "Do you hear, sir?—What, in the sulks, too?"

A sulky mood was the last in which young Darcy ever indulged. His silence proceeded from a better feeling. In point of fact, the poor boy was following but too strictly a parental precept contained in a letter he had that morning received from home. In a cursory perusal of that epistle, which had been penned by his excellent mother, his eye, not many minutes before, had caught the following admonition:

"But of all things, my dear Charles, never reply to reproof: silence at all times will be found to befriend you most."

The undue accusation of sullenness, as applied to the timid and abashed boy, had already won for him the advocacy of an individual often disposed to be more loquacious than discreet.

"I axes your pardon," interposed the quarter-master of the watch, addressing his superior from his perched position—the weather caronnade nearest the wheel; at which stood, steering the ship, a seaman nick-named by the foremastmen, "*Pleasant Paul*," from the circumstance of his being probably the surliest sailor to be found *afloat*.

"I axes your pardon, sir," proceeded the quarter-master; "but I does n't, indeed, sir, think as the young gemman's silence can be clapt down ——"

"Silence! silence! you sir," interrupted the lieutenant, authoritatively: who asked *you*, you old babbling block-head, to put in your oar?"

"I never, sir," retorted Weatherly, for such was the name of the quarter-master at the conn, "*I* never, sir, puts in *my* oar till I sees a-kashun to clap in the rullock."

The provoking composure with which this sally was delivered, added to the studied observance of official respect paid by the speaker to the person of his superior, was little calculated to allay the lieutenant's ire. During the delivery of this pointed reply, Weatherly's little, low, hard-a-weather hat was risen from his head, and with extended arm held high in air.

Weatherly was one of those venerable, and indeed, we might add, venerated petty officers, who in the late war was to be found in every ship in commission; and who from a consciousness of their own moral and professional merits, often arrogated to themselves the privilege of *speech*. From this circumstance, Weatherly with the mids was considered as a sort of Mentor, and with the lieutenants, a *tor-mentor*, as a punster would say, of no ordinary tongue.

"You may depend on't," continued the veteran, determined, if not to be heeded, at least to be heard, "you may depend on't, sir, it's fairly the fear o' telling the truth as ties the young gemman's tongue. Nothin' off, boy—luff, bo' luff—nat'ral bent of his natur' broke out in the right place ——"

"I'll put you in the right place directly, if I hear any more of that sort of talk," interrupted the first lieutenant, shaking his trumpet in a menacing manner at the head of the elevated veteran: "discipline of the ship's going to the very devil!"

"If he had n't been readin' his letter on the locker abaft," proceeded the quarter-master, regardless of the lieutenant's threat, "he'd 'a seed the Admiral's signal. Very well thyst—thyst, and no higher, bo'. Wrap full, *my son*—natur's natur—nothing off bo' again—threw him off his guard. Luff a little, bo',—heart will get the better o' the head. Dash my wig, Paul, not so much lee

helm; ~~she~~ does n't like her rudder hangin' athaut her starn-post, for all the world like a caulker's stage under the counter."

"So you were reading your letter, sir," said Leather-lungs, sneeringly, taking his cue from Weatherly's rambling remarks, "reading your letter on the lockers abaft, eh? March, sir, to ~~the~~ maintopmast-head. You shall have plenty of time there, I promise you, to peruse your crossed scratch."

With a cheerful alacrity, strongly contrasted with the crawling pace of his friend Fuller, Darcy ascended the maintopmast cross-trees, and seating himself securely to leeward of the mast, pulled from his pocket his parent's epistle. Here in comparative solitude, and free as it were from official interruption, he indulged in the best of filial feelings. His mother's letter was bathed in tears.

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### CHAPTER III.

"Yes; I do think that you might pardon him,  
And neither heaven, nor man, grieve at the mercy."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

"Let me go no further to mine answer."

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

THE two delinquents had been already an hour and upwards at their penal posts. Evening was drawing nigh, when the chaplain of the ship, who, as we have already said, was a "merry soul," loved, with others of the "ward-room idlers," to enjoy the tranquil and uninterrupted walk which the poop at this particular period usually afforded. Mr. Lawrence had already heard that his protégée, young Darcy, had fallen under the displeasure of the first lieutenant, and, for punishment, had been sent to the maintopmast-head.

The chaplain had already ascended the quarter-deck ladder, and, perceiving the first lieutenant leaning with folded arms on the weather-waist hammock-rails, as if contemplating the tranquil descent of the sun, whose "lower limb" had just "dipped" the horizon, advanced



to his messmate, and, gently touching his arm, thus spoke:—

"Leatherlungs, I know you dislike every thing from me in the shape of a sermon; and you well know, to please you, my discourses are frequently curtailed of their fair proportions."

"To be sure," interrupted the first lieutenant, "always like to see the ship's company go to dinner at the regular time. Better to see the people supping their soup, and greasing their chops below, than sleeping and snoring at church on deck."

"I am well aware of that," returned the chaplain; "but just look at the setting sun, with all its fire tamed into serenity, as it sinks from the sight."

"Hollo, parson, postising! That's to me worse even than sermonising. Why, what tack are ye on now? Seldom see you in a serious mood," said Leatherlungs, affecting a jocular air.

"Is it not," continued the chaplain, "a soothing scene?"

"Capital time for taking an amplitude."

"Does it not seem to breathe peace and goodwill to all men?"

"Yes, it's a peaceable-looking sun enough: sets with little indication of mischief; neither wild nor watery."

"Well, now, Leatherlungs," said Lawrence, drawing nearer to his messmate, "though you dislike a long sermon, I am sure you will not be impatient at a short text."

"A short text! Why, what the deuce are you at? What traverse are you working now?"

"None: plain-sailing is the sailing which suits me best. But, I say, Leatherlungs," said the chaplain, looking aloft, "see you that docile lad whom you have sent for punishment to the mast-head? His fault was merely an excess of veneration for his mother, whose letters absorbed all his faculties. I think, and, indeed, I am sure, on reflection——"

"Reflection! parson; first lieutenants have no time to reflect."

"Well, I feel confident," returned Lawrence, "you will not consider that I am reflecting on the first lieute-

nant, when I say that I think he has treated the youngster a *leetle* harshly."

"And pray, parson, is this your short text?"

"No. My text is this," said the chaplain, pointing to the sinking luminary: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

"Wrath! that's a good one. What, mast-heading a couple of midshipmen for a blind look-out? You'll next call the '*Articles of war*' a work of wrath."

The chaplain laughed.

"You may laugh, parson; but you'd find it no laughing matter to be run down, and all hands sent to glory, because the first lieutenant, forsooth, was squeamish about making an example of a couple of lazy lads."

The lieutenant's logic appeared to be a poser to the parson, who in reply urged only for Darcy a mitigation of punishment.

"The younker must remain longer aloft—half-an-hour yet, at least," said Leatherlungs, in a tone which indicated a fixed resolve. "Discipline of the ship demands it. Besides, it won't do to let the mids suspect the parson's the controlling power. Things are *bad* enough already. Ever see such a difference since the return of a certain person? Ship's scarcely the same—men and mids all alike, slack as water; but, stand fast, before the cruise is out, I'll bring some of 'em up with the round turn—I'll let 'em see that there's at least *one* officer in the ship determined to support his station, and maintain his character in the service."

And then abruptly turning his head and looking aloft, the supporter of his station sung out—

"Fore-topmost head there?"

There was no reply.

"There's a sulky fellow for ye. He hears me well enough, but wont answer."

The masthead was again hailed. Fuller sullenly responded.

"Shift over, sir, to the weather side of the mast," commanded the first lieutenant; "do you think, sir, you're sent there for *pleasure*?" Then turning to the chaplain, "I'll work that chap—it's all *his* doing. I'll keep him there the standing part of the first watch. Come,

parson," concluded the lieutenant, "come, suppose you now top your boom, and join the jollies, and the rest of the fine-weather fry, in a jaw on the poop."

The chaplain "parted company," and proceeded to the poop.

"Send for the carpenter," cried Leatherlungs, addressing the mate of the watch.

The messenger was despatched for Mr. Maul.

Maul, according to the *cognoscenti* of the cockpit, (and the denizens of the orlop are seldom in error in matters not immediately connected with the ship's way) was a character—a fish of the first water. In his vocation, he loved to labour, and to labour hard, to work himself, and to work others. He was also a mechanic of all work—for to him all work was alike.

Not that he was a jack-of-all-trades! Maul was master of many. Sometimes he might be seen on the skids, performing the part of "top-sawyer;" sawing with might and main the heel of an "expended top-mast," or converting a yard-arm piece into "inch or two-inch" of "*cappenbar*" plank. At other times, repairing a mid-shipman's quadrant; making a model for a jury-mast; chalking out a "cooper" for the ward-room wine; turning a spare wooden leg for the ship's cook; caulking a leak over the captain's cot; veneering a writing-desk for the first lieutenant; or welding, in conjunction with the blacksmith, a heated hoop at the armourer's forge.

Of the discipline of his crew he was particularly proud; and certes, compelled as we are to chronicle truth, the "carpenter's crew" was the only portion of the ship's crew which at all approximated to anything like an orderly state. At work, Maul never permitted his men to talk:—"Words," he was wont to say, "were the adverse winds of work;"—and, to prove the truth of this, his favourite "*saw*," he never took tool in hand that he began not to whistle like a thrush.

In official intercourse, Maul was provokingly sparing of speech. Questions "on-service" invariably met with brief replies, it being contrary to the carpenter's creed to be too explicit or over communicative on mechanical matters.

*Already was* "Chips" in the presence of his superior.

"Mr. Maul," said Leatherlungs, still standing on the gangway, "is the paint of the first cutter yet dry?"

"No, sir."

"How's that?" asked the lieutenant, not a little solicitous for the fate of a favourite green he had been "green enough" to purchase for the public service at his own expense: for Sir Montague, as Leatherlungs was wont to complain, "never launched out a penny on paint." To commemorate his recent marriage, the Baronet had, to be sure, contributed the severe sum of thirty shillings to re-gild and re-touch some portion of the figure-head, which the carver had intended should represent some female form.

"Not yet dry?" repeated Leatherlungs.

"Wont set, sir."

"Why not?"

"'Cause it *wont*, sir."

"Why wont it?"

"Paint, sir, 's taken a parverse turn."

"Perhaps," said Leatherlungs, "you omitted to insert the proper quantity of drier?"

"No, I didn't, sir."

"Why, how much did you put in?"

"Enough, sir."

"Then, why the devil, sir," said the first lieutenant, petulantly, "why the devil don't the paint dry?"

"It sulks, sir."

"*Sulks?*" echoed Leatherlungs.

"Yes, sir, vardigrease often sulks, looks blue, and turns every colour but the colour it ought."

"Was all the rum inserted which I sent you by the ward-room steward?"

"Yes, sir."

"Sure of *that*?" said Leatherlungs, casting at Chips an incredulous leer.

"Sartin, sir."

"Sure it wasn't drained off?"

"Sartin, sir."

"How do you know?"

"Tasted it, sir."

"How did it taste?"

"Rummish, sir."

"Rummish, indeed ! . You're a *rum* fellow, Mr. Maul," said Leatherlungs, half jocularly. "Come, down with you, and tell the sergeant of marines to clap a sentry over the cutter on the quarter ; and let him have the strictest orders that nobody goes near the boat till the paint is thoroughly set."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Maul, descending the gangway ladder, more than ever convinced, that brevity was the soul of wit.

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## CHAPTER IV.

"See how mischances suddenly do fall,  
And steal upon us, furthest being from doubt:  
Our life's uncertain."

DRAYTON.

THE officer of the watch, for whom Leatherlungs had been "looking out," as it is technically termed, had now appeared on deck.

Mr. John Alexander Giles was the second lieutenant of the ship. In person, deportment, and professional ability, he was the very antithesis of the gaunt, bustling, and boisterous Leatherlungs. If the one was tall as a top-mast, with a voice like thunder, the other was hardly handspike high, and always delivered his orders in accents drawling and mild as milk. From the latter peculiarity, he obtained for himself the *soubriquet* of "*Gentle Johnny*."

"Well, Johnny," said Leatherlungs, handing him the speaking trumpet, which, in those days, was considered the insignia of office, "you have taken a precious spell below."

"Why, I fear," said the gentle Giles, "I fear I have, *indeed*, intruded a little on your good nature."

"Well, never mind: here you have her—I've set the foresail, you see ; for we were rather dropping astern. I say, Johnny, look abaft on the poop—precious muster there of the fine-weather fry."

"I'm glad to see them there," said Giles : "it always *portends* favourable weather."

"Weather!—I'll weather them presently, I'll warrant you," said Leatherlungs, chuckling at his own words.

The "fine-weather fry," as designated by the first lieutenant, consisted of those of the ward-room officers, who have, ever since the days of Benbow, rejoiced in the honorary distinction of "*Idlers* of the mess." Not that in *edible* doings the idlers are not the most "executive" afloat; indeed the idlers of the Nonsuch had rare stomachs; it was wicked work with them when it came to be "six upon four," in other words, when long cruises produced short commons.

The surgeon and purser were both, to use the phrase of the day, "followers of the captain;" and well were they fitted to follow in so wise a wake. Indeed, to their mental deficiency, which each sought to conceal, by indulging in the most sycophantic assiduity, both worthies, it was well known, owed their respective appointments; for Sir Montague, like many other people in power, was no patron to merit, still less to talent. Not that the baronet, above all men, need to have been apprehensive that *talent* was contagious; but indeed, with the exception of the chaplain, who was the life and soul of the mess, the ward-room idlers of the Nonsuch were thorough drones.

As for the purser, Mr. Benjamin Bung (for his was really no "purser's name,"\*) he was the prince of bores. He could prate upon no other topic but his "balance bill." Daily did he deplore his deficiency of horn lanterns, of iron hoops, his losses by leakage, and, above all, the extravagant waste of oil, coal, and candle consumed for the service of the ship.

The surgeon, who, by virtue of an Aberdeen diploma, had the M. D. affixed to his name, was indisputably the most addle-headed botcher (we had nearly said butcher,) that ever tortured tar, or extracted sound for unsound teeth. Perpetually was he "topping the officer" over the assistant, who possessed considerable surgical science; and yet Doctor Dunanne (Dun-sarney, as the Jacks used to call him,) was for ever denouncing his helpmate's professional deficiency. The captain of marines was a mere mass of floating flesh—a sort of amphibious alder-

\* A purser's name, in naval parlance, means a fictitious name.

man rigged in regimentals. When in parade attire, and girded tightly-in with his silken sash, his eyes might probably (should a twitch of the gout put him in anything but a "head's up" posture) get a sympathising peep at his toes; but when, like the larger towns of lute, full freedom was given to the body corporate, and all around was unrestrained and let loose, the sight became obstructed, and the "understanding" lost in the launch of liberty.

And yet George was by no means an unmanageable messmate; give him but a secure seat at the weather side of the ward-room table, so as he could sup his pea soup and masticate his toasted pork, without the contents of his plate rolling over into his lazy lap; time to muddle his pint of port, without the chance of losing by a lee-lurch the smallest portion of his cherished allowance; and, to wind up all, ensure to him but twelve uninterrupted hours to stretch his huge carcass in his cot, clear of the "muzzled bull dog"\* in his confined crib, and he was,

"Yours for ever."

As for the "party"† under his immediate command, he cared not whether it fattened into a thriving corps, or fell away into a mere skeleton *corpse*.‡ Then as for his subs, the greenest of green "galoots," neither had an idea beyond a draught board, button burnisher, or stick of pipe clay. Of military tactics, they had not the smallest smattering—flank movements or hollow squares never entered their hollow heads; and, as for "*Dundas*,"§ save the minister who gave them their commissions, and consigned them to idle their dull days in scraping catgut or torturing the tones of a cracked and discordant flute, the name was thoroughly unknown.

And yet Dryden says,—

"God never made his work for man to mend."

Had the poet lived to witness a review at "South Sea

\* Bull dog—the great gun which stands "housed" in the cabin of the ward-room officer.

† The complement of marines serving afloat are so designated.

‡ The corps are invariably called the *corpse* by the foremast men.

§ *Dundas*, on *Military Tactics*.

Common," he would have acknowledged the error of his metrical dogma, and have confessed, that of all God's creation, the most amended in every particular were the commissioned officers of that incomparable corps, now universally admitted to be the finest and most efficient military force to be found in Europe.

"I say, Johnny," said Leatherlungs, addressing the officer of the watch in a jocular air, "we must break up that council of war on the poop. See if we can't make a clearance abaft. Pipe 'Stand by hammocks.'"

"Forecastle there!" hailed the second lieutenant in his usual shrill and drawling accents.

"Sir!" responded the hoarse boatswain.

"Please, Mr. Brown, stand by *the* hammocks."

"*Please!* Giles," said Leatherlungs, in a monitory tone. "What the devil do you mean by pleasing the boatswain? Can't you give your orders like an officer? Discipline of the ship's positively going to the devil."

"Stand by hammocks!" vociferated the first lieutenant: the thunder of whose voice produced an effect similar to firing a gun to enforce an unseen signal.

The preparatory pipe the twit, twit, twit, twit of the boatswain and his several mates, acted like magic in clearing the poop of all the "fine-weather fry," save the chaplain, who stood his ground as stiff as a steeple.

In all ships, even in well-regulated vessels of war, the movement of piping down hammocks is not one in which too much of courtesy can be said to be observed. Neither "Jack" nor "Joey" is over-particular with whom he comes in collision, or who he pummels (*accidentally*) in passing with his shouldered "sack." At this movement, which is always made *en masse*, "church and state" must take their chance. Of this the chaplain was perfectly aware; but the fact is, Lawrence knew he stood well with the foremastmen, and had been long set down as "none o' yer nice uns:" an opinion which, in this stirring and jostling scene, went a long way in ensuring to his person proper respect.

The ship's company being now busily occupied in hanging up their hammocks on the lower deck, the first lieutenant seemed to think it a favourable opportunity to comply with the parson's request.



"Maintopmast head there!" hailed Leatherlungs, in the subdued tone usually assumed on such occasions.

"Sir!" was the shrill, and ready response.

"Come down, young gentleman. Come down, Mr. Darcy."

"Ay, ay, sir," rejoined Darcy, in accents which at once indicated a feeling of gratitude for his unlooked-for release.

With the same spirit of alacrity with which he had gone aloft, the youngster now descended the topmast and lower rigging, the chaplain all the while watching the boy in his rapid run down the rattlings of the shrouds. At length, when the lad had descended within a few feet of the quarter-deck hammock-rails, his parent's cherished letter, which had been placed in the pocket of his unbuttoned jacket, accidentally slipped out; and the youngster, endeavouring in an over-reached effort to regain it, lost his balance, and with the weather-roll of the ship, fell from the lower shrouds.

"Good God!" exclaimed the parson, "the boy's overboard!"

Startled by the heavy splash heard in the water, as he stood on the gangway, with his back turned to the main rigging, the gentle Giles exclaimed,—

"Bless my soul! I do verily believe that somebody has fallen overboard."

"Seeing's believing," said Leatherlungs, who flew like lightning forward on the forecastle, to let go the maintop bow-line, with a view of backing the main-yard, and stopping the ship's way through the water.

"Giles, Giles! Let go the lee main-brace," bellowed the first lieutenant from the forecastle.

Giles, who, touching all matters of "Reports," was punctilious even to a fault, had already entered the cabin, for the laudable purpose of "reporting" to the captain,—

"A man overboard!"

The confined brace was, however, disengaged from its cleat by the chaplain on the poop, who instantaneously on letting it go, sprang to the lee-quarter cutter, to clear her for lowering. Here, however, his alacrity, ere he reached the life-rail leading to the suspended boat, met, indeed, with unexpected obstruction.

"Musn't go into that boat, sir," cried the sentinel who

had been recently placed over the painted cutter, at the same time pulling the chaplain back by the skirt of his coat.

"Inhuman monster!" ejaculated Lawrence, "is it your object to cause loss of life?"

"I know my orders, sir."

Regardless of all orders, Lawrence again essayed to enter the boat; but the bare bayonet presented to his breast compelled him to forego his purpose. In a second he sprang to the weather side of the poop to clear away the boat which was suspended to the davits on the opposite quarter; but here his quick sight was scared by another obstruction.

The boat was under repair; several streaks had been removed from her bottom. In this state it was manifest that, if lowered, she would instantly fill and founder: neither was oar, nor mast, nor spar left in the boat. The life-buoy, it is true, had been cut away by the sentinel to leeward; but this drifted in the ship's wake, widely away from the struggling youth. To Lawrence the sight of the poor boy buffeting the tops of the white-headed waves (for a cross sea was fast getting up) was not to be borne. The look of terror depicted in Darcy's face wrung the heart of his friend, across whose mind flashed many distracting images: he thought of the gallant boy contending in vain with his fate; of the bereaved mother, and her wild outcries for her lost and only son; of her subsequent dumb despair, and longing for death, because the only being that alone had reconciled her to life had perished. Such ideas were torment, and he instantly resolved to save the youth or be lost with him. His coat was already thrown off, and he was about to plunge headlong into the tumbling sea, when the timely voice of the same sentinel, who had seemed to him such an inhuman monster, checked his resolve.

"For God's sake! sir, don't attempt it—the jolly-boat; the jolly-boat, sir."

The suggestion was enough.

Meanwhile the second lieutenant, who had returned from his important service of arousing his commander from his *siesta*, had already, in conjunction with the Irish waister who had been standing at the 'lee-wheel,' repaired to the poop for the purpose of lowering the jolly-boat suspended at the stern.

Where, may it be asked, was the quarter-master at the conn? Contrary to the custom observed in well-regulated vessels of war, the quarter-master at the conn had forsaken his station, and without waiting his regular relief had shouldered his hammock, and borne it below to the cable tier.

Lawrence (and be it observed that this was the *third* boat he had sought to clear and lower) had already entered the "*jolly*," and had cast adrift her grips and confining gear, when the Irish waister, in his haste and anxiety to "clear for running the foremast fall," accidentally, though awkwardly would be nearer to the truth, threw off from the belaying cleat the turns of the tackle by which the boat's bow was suspended. By this accident the poor parson was precipitated headlong into the sea, and the boat was ultimately swamped under the stern of the ship.

No sooner had Lawrence risen to the surface of the water, and had recovered from the shock of his lofty fall, than he was seen breasting the surge, and making his way to the sinking youth. Until the noise and confusion afloat had drowned his voice, distinctly was he heard hailing and cheering Darcy in his danger.

"Hold up! hold up, my boy! *I'm coming to your aid!* Fear not; don't tire yourself;—try and tread the water. That's a fine fellow! There's a brave boy!"

"A fine fellow!" exclaimed the Irish waister, who had distinctly heard the chaplain's words in the water. "By Jagers, a finer feller never sot fut afloat nor yer same self, Larking Larry. Bad luck to the fall, it flew so fast, it fairly fired my hands."

And now thundered forth the mandate of the first lieutenant.

"Turn the hands up! out yawl! Where's the boson? Good God! where's Mr. Brown?"

Mr. Brown had deserted the fore-castle to "freshen his nip" in the fore-cockpit.

"By the Immaculate Man, if a life's lost I'll break that skulking, lubberly boson!"

"A man overboard! A man overboard!" vociferated the timbered-toed cook, stooping his body downward over the main-deck combings of the fore-hatchway, his

unbending wooden leg pointing straight upwards in the air.

The hue and cry increased on the lower deck:—"A man overboard! A man overboard!" resounded fore and aft the ship; seamen and marines were tumbling over the stray hammocks strewed upon the different decks, whilst others were running up the ladders in the greatest confusion.

"Silence! silence! Good heaven! silence!" ejaculated the first lieutenant in a voice of thunder. "Clear away the yawl;—up wi' the stays, and down wi' the yard tackles. O! you Mr. Brown! You're a precious boson, indeed! Where were you, sir, that you were not to be found to turn the hands up? No *reply*, sir,—silence!"

Confusion was now rendered "worse confounded" by the official interference of the drowsy captain.

"What! somebody overboard? Cut away,—cut away the life-boat abaft. Mr. Leatherlungs, Mr. Leatherlungs, what's the use of the quarter-boats, sir?"

Leatherlungs made no reply. He was better employed.

At length the boat on the booms was hoisted out, and a willing crew was soon seen pulling away with might and main astern of the ship.

"Mast head there!" hailed the first lieutenant: "point to the men in the water."

"They sees 'em, sir, in the yawl. She's steering right for 'em."

The excitement of the spectators already crowded on the poop had now risen to a painful height. Darcy's youth—his intelligence—his amiable disposition, and general amenity of manner—flashed upon the mind of every man who thought of the poor boy in his peril: whilst the noble intrepidity of the parson, who evidently was resolved to share his danger, and who had long stood in the new and almost anomalous position of "pet of the people," was the admiration of all around.

"Mr. Lawrence," said the signal-man, who with his glass to his eye had already placed himself in the mizen-top, watching the movements of the parson in the water, "Mr. Lawrence, sir, has just closed wi' the young gentleman. There!—no,—yes,—yes, sir—there! there!—*he's*

got him !—he *has* him ! holdin' him up by the hair o' the head."

"Bravo, Larry!" simultaneously burst from several voices on the poop, "*What* a chap!"

The bowman of the boat had already thrown in his oar, and now was seen "the row-out of all," and a couple of stout topmen bending their bodies over the gunnel of the yawl, and grappling with Lawrence and his apparently lifeless load.

"All right," said Leatherlungs, rubbing his hands, with a countenance beaming with delight.

Sir Montague retired to his cabin. The steward had announced "coffee."

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## CHAPTER V.

"And on my face he turn'd an eye of death,"

SHAKESPEARE.

"What frantic fit, quoth he, has thus distraught  
Thee, foolish man, so rash a doom to give?"

SPENSER.

YOUNG DARCY was now brought aboard, and borne forward to the "Sick Bay," in all appearance a corpse. Stripped of his wet clothes, his body, which was clammy and icy-cold, was wrapt in a warm blanket. In this position he was placed upon the deck. His closed eyes, his colourless and open lips, together with the fixed expression of despair which still hung upon his brow, gave to his countenance an aspect unsightly and ghastly in the extreme.

The doctor had already been waiting in attendance. And now his medical skill was to be put to the test.

"The boy's quite *deed*," said the Doctor, placing his huge hand on the region of the youngster's heart. "There's nae mair to be done—its a' over."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the assistant surgeon, in a contradictory tone; "the vital spark is not yet extinct. By prompt measures the boy may be restored to *life*!"

"Muster Smith," returned the M. D. indignantly, "do you mean to insinuate, sir, that you know better than me, your superior officer? I desire, sir, you keep your opinion to yourself till asked!"

"I still say, sir," said the assistant, "that by heat, friction, and inflating the lungs, the boy may be saved."

"Silence, sir," said Dunanney, dictatorially. "Such presumption I never heard of! It's quite insufferable!"

At this moment the Chaplain, who had already shifted his dripping apparel, made his appearance in the sick bay.

"Well, Doctor, what hope?"

"Nae!—none, whatever."

"Good God!" exclaimed the Chaplain, throwing up his arms with sudden emotion.

"Mr. Lawrence," whispered the assistant surgeon, "send for Mr. Leatherlungs—the boy's yet to be saved."

The Parson took the hint, and soon returned with Dunanney's *dread*.

"Well, Mr. Dunanney, any hopes?" asked the first lieutenant.

Dunanney made no reply. He and the first lieutenant, according to the then phrase afloat, were not on "speaking terms."

"Smith, any hopes?" asked Leatherlungs, turning to the assistant surgeon.

"I have hope, sir," responded Smith; "indeed I entertain not the smallest doubt of resuscitation, if the patient be immediately placed before the galley fire, rubbed with salt, and I be allowed to inflate his lungs."

"Well, what do you wait for? Why the deuce don't you *do* something?"

"Mr. Dunanney says, sir, the boy's dead."

"Mr. Dunanney be d——d!" said Leatherlungs, with emphatic force. "Smith, do you do what's right:—I'll answer for it, you do no wrong."

"Muster Leatherlungs," said Dunanney, making up his body, his mind being already made up,—“this, sir, is most insulting language; and very unfit to fall from the lips of the first lieutenant.”

"The lips of the first lieutenant, I plainly see, will yet have to silence the surgeon."

"Muster Leatherlungs, you have nae right to say so—nor have you the least right to interfere with me in the execution of my office!"

"Smith," said the first lieutenant, treating the Doctor's words as wind, "away with the youngster to the galley fire. The boy's not to *die* because Mr. Dunanney's *dined*."

"I understand you, sir. But, Sir Montague shall determine whether such unjustifiable and insulting reflections are to be made upon *his* surgeon."

"*His* surgeon!—You are not *his* surgeon! You're in his Majesty's pay," retorted Leatherlungs, leaving the doctor in the dudgeons, and following the borne boy, to witness the process of resuscitation.

The cook, anticipating the medical treatment which it was presumed even Dunanney would probably pursue, had already kindled an unusually large fire in the galley grate.

"Holloa!—What's all this?" says the niggardly purser, walking forward on the main deck, and approaching the galley fire; for Bung's attention, when standing under the poop whilst the people were replacing the yawl upon the booms, was attracted by heavy fumes of smoke issuing from the funnel on the forecastle. "What the devil are the cooks about at *this* time of the evening with such a roaring fire? More coals, by the Lord, are burnt in this paltry bit of a sixty-four, than in the largest three-decker in the service."

"Mister Bung," said Leatherlungs, whose person among the crowd collected and collecting in the vicinity of the cook's coppers, was concealed from the purser's view, "Mr. Bung, the cook deserves credit for his forethought. I ordered him to keep the fire up; so the sooner you top your boom, and shape a course for the cockpit the better."

"The cook, of course," said Bung, sullenly, "must obey the orders of the first lieutenant; but there's another authority, thank God, to be *yet* consulted. Sir Montague won't see *his* purser ruined for nothing."

"Sir Montague's surgeon! Sir Montague's purser! *By the Immaculate Man!*" ejaculated Leatherlungs, indulging in his favourite exclamation, "these followers,

these *fancy-men*, give themselves as many airs as ministers of state. Discipline of the ship's going to the very devil!"

The truth of the lieutenant's closing remark was fully illustrated by the succeeding titter heard in the vicinity of the coppers.

"The boy breathes!" exclaimed the Chaplain in joyous accents; rub, rub, rub, my fine fellows. "You'll soon restore the circulation."

"I feel it already at the wrist," said Smith, glancing at Lawrence an exulting look.

"Thank God! Thank God!" ejaculated the Chaplain, squeezing the hand of the assistant surgeon. "Smith, Smith, you've saved the boy!"

Smith thought the boy's salvation was due to the speaker, but complimentary language was not then the order of the day.

"Now," said Smith, "a tea-spoon full of brandy and water, and, I think," added he patting gently the pallid cheek of his patient, "I think the poor fellow will do well."

The fluid was administered. In a few seconds, the eyes of the sufferer gradually opened their swollen lids, and now a vacant and unconscious gaze was thrown on all around. This visible and outward sign of returning life was too much for Darcy's sensitive guardian. The brave,—the gay,—the lively,—the larking Larry burst into tears.

"Holloa, parson! swab up, my hearty—Never say die, though the doctor does. Where's Mr. Dunanney *now*?" said Leatherlungs, exultingly. "Well done, Smith, you're the man for me. Wish I'd a seat at the 'Sick-and-hurt Board,' I'd soon sign your warrant."

"Not my *death-warrant*, I'll be sworn, sir," said Smith, who never failed, when an opportunity offered, to fire at Dunanney a sly shot.

The resuscitated youth was now borne to the cockpit, and there comfortably placed in a cot which was suspended from the beams.

Dunanney proceeded on deck to make his official report to the captain in the cabin.

"Sir *Montague*," said the sycophantic quack, approach-



ing the table at which the captain and Gorge (the only individual of the dinner guests who had attended the steward's summons, were sipping their coffee.

"Sit dowl, doctor," said the captain.

It may be necessary to apprise the reader that Sir Montague was always at fault in his articulation of the letter N,\* and that, in its stead, the second letter preceding in the alphabet supplied the deficiency.

The triumvirate were seated in the baronet's after-cabin; an apartment which uninitiated ladies, and gentlemen of the press, usually dignify by the high-sounding epithet of "State." In this instance, however, the term might not be considered altogether inappropriate, inasmuch as the "State-cabin" was the favourite abode of the only statesman "borne on the books" of any of the ships pertaining to the Channel fleet.

The floor, as our female friends would term the deck of the after-cabin, was covered with Brussels carpet of a costly pattern. Appended to the bulwarks, and neatly fitted between the beams over-head, book-cases were seen in every shape and of every size—not that their racks contained food for the mind; for wooden works supplied the place of literary lore. "The baronet's books," as the bargeman used to say, when preparing the cabin for company, "were, like himself, all shain and show." The backs of these blocks were richly covered in many-coloured morocco, and the several titles of the whole miscellaneous mass were set forth in gilt letters of a glaring size. The reader may readily conceive the extent of erudition and of "black letter" knowledge of the baronet's librarian, when he is informed that his sable woolly-headed steward had the nomination of all, and stood sponsor for many of the works which graced the shelves of the legislator's literary stock. Indeed, bound as we are to adhere to insipid matter-of-fact truth, we are compelled to state that the only typical production (that is to say of the *private* property pertaining to the

\* The writer sailed with an amiable and excellent officer, now no more, who had the same defect in his articulation of this letter. But he was no "mute." If he could not always command his N, he could command his ship; and could "mind his P's and Q's" as well as any "A B" in his Majesty's service.

senator) to be found in the state cabin, was a small octavo volume, entitled, "*Every Man his Own Orator*."

But to the doctor's report.

"A cup of coffee, doctor?" said Sir Montague, invitingly.

"Nae thank ye, Sir Montagoo, I've coffeed already."

"It was touch ald go with the youlg dog? Learly up with him, wasl't it, doctor?"

"Why, indeed, Sir Montagoo, we may say it was oop wi' him; for, in fact, he might ha' been set doon as deed."

"But you now proloulce him out of all dalger?"

"Why, I think, Sir Montagoo, he's pratty safe noo."

"Well, well! what will lot skill accomplish? as I sometimes say in the Commols."

Gorge seldom spoke, or achieved a laugh, for he knew from experience what it was to laugh in the wrong place. A laugh when serving on the West India station had well nigh cost him his sub's commission. But little subject as was even the dull "Jolly" either to the impression of humour or to conceive a humorous thought, there was something so ludicrous in the bare idea of Mute's ever opening his mouth in the "Commols," that the fat guest, in endeavouring to restrain his risible muscles, spluttered out on the captain's carpet all the coffee he had just taken into his mouth.

"Steward," bawled the baronet, "a towel here."

By return of towel, the steward was on his knees repairing damages.

"To-morrow evelil', recollect," said Sir Montague, "coffee in the *fore* cabil."

"Tink so *too*, sar," said the steward, significantly: "save the carpet, sar."

"Lice operatiol, Captain Gorge," said the baronet, addressing his guest.

Gorge was at a loss to discern whether the operation had reference to the staining of the carpet, or to the recovery of the boy. The baronet's interrogatories were not always the clearest in conception, much less in delivery.

"Troublesome affair, I suppose, doctor?"

"I *dun* know, Sir Montagoo. At his years natur works wonders."

"Certainly, certainly. By-the-by, doctor, how did the youlg dog happel to fall overboard? Skylarkil aloft, I suppose?"

"Mister Leatherlungs, Sir Montagoo, can beset inform ye upon that soobject."

"Why, I lo that; but you lo, doctor, the first lieutelaht cait have his eyes every where."

"I only know, Sir Montagoo," returned Dunannsy, with marked emphasis, "that his eyes are sometimes where they ought not to light."

"How do you meal, doctor? Do't ilderstald you."

Gorge, thinking it now time to retire, rose from his chair, leaving the doctor to elucidate his meaning.

"It's all over noo, Sir Montagoo," said Dunannsy, looking to see if Gorge had closed the door of the after cabin; "but I think for the futur, Sir Montagoo, we must manage to keep the sick-bay lessa soobject to interlopers and lookers on."

"Certainly, certainly. The sick-bay ought to be colsidered as the doctor's domiliol. Lohody has aly right to be there but such as are sick or colvalescent. That's my lotiol of the matter, and I should hope it is likewise the surgeoil's lotiol."

"It's mine, I can assure you, Sir Montagoo, and I feel proud that my opinion is backed by such superlatesse authority."

"Plail as a pikestaff. The sick-bay's the doctor's pro- viles."

"Then, Sir Montagoo, I shall tak it as a great favour—indeed, for the sak of science and the good of the ser- vice, I might prawe the pint—but, individually, Sir Mon- tagoo, I shall tak it as a great favour, if when some fast- ing opportunity offers, you will be good enough to impress upon the mind of the first leaftenant your own admirable notions touching the sanetity of the sick-bay."

"Certainly, certainly. To-morrow, or next day at fur- thest, I shall issue a writtel order of the subjeet."

The captain's "written orders"—we beg the baronet's pardon, the legislator's laws for the better government of his majesty's ship—were very luminous. Possibly they

did not in number exceed the statutes of the state; but certes, in contradiction, they surpassed the "laws of the land."

"You desire nothing more of me to-night, Sir Montagoo?" asked the favourite "follower," rising to retire.

"Lo, lothil, doctor. Though yes,—low I thilk of it, I wish you would send me something to make me sleep; I do!t sleep at all at light."

"I'm not at all surprised at it, sir; the mind, the mind, Sir Montagoo," said the toady, tapping his beetle brow. "But you *shall* sleep to-night, Sir Montagoo. I'll promise you your reest to-night, Sir Montagoo;" and so saying, the doctor, booing, retired from the presence.

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## CHAPTER VI.

"Now comes the sweetest morsel of the night."

SHAKSPEARE.

"EIGHT bells" had already struck—the last dog-watch had been relieved—the cat-head and other "look-out men" had taken to their "monkies"\*—cleared their tails—turned their quids, and buttoned up for a breeze.

The ship, which had drifted considerably to leeward during the long interval which had elapsed in hoisting out and hoisting in the boat which had rescued Darcy and the chaplain from a watery grave, had already, by a press of sail, recovered her lost ground, and again was seen last of the lee-line, jogging leisurely along under three topsails and foretop-must stay-sail.

This sort of sailing or crawling under easy canvass becomes to the mariner the most tedious and monotonous of locomotion; and this, too, when it must be manifest, that under such sail the ship is rendered the "snugger," and the less exposed to those casualties incidental to wind and weather. Still the "easy jog," or, as it might be nautically termed, the *tritopsail-trot*, produces on all aboard, from Blue at the main to black at the coppers,

\* The sailor terms his great-coat or pea-jacket his "monkey."

nought but listlessness,—a moping melancholy,—a sort of *tedium-vitæ*, which we are assured by the sable *savans* and woolly-headed wise of the west, flying-fish never experience.

"Fly-fish, sar," says your true 'Barbadian barn,' "fly-fish, sar, nebur dull dog; no time, sar, to look glum. 'Spose him fly, sar, him fly for fear; 'spose him swim, sar, him swim for fun. Fly-fish, sar, nebur die o' dumps. Beneta hab him; but beneta no hab him till him wet him wing; like Buckara-man, when him wet him whistle,—die drunk."

Doctor Johnson, too, (who, although a bulky body, was nevertheless in matters of motion no mean authority,) was wont to assert, that to him nothing was so exhilarating as fast travelling, or rattling over the ground at a rapid rate; and so it is at sea.

Though only for a temporary purpose—no destination in view—no port to make—no object beyond a "flight of fancy;" still, the crowded sail—the lofty canvass swelling to the breeze—the heeling vessel yielding to the sudden gust—the topping spray jetting high in air, scintillating in the sun's reflecting rays, and falling around like a shower of glittering gems—the deep plunge—the boiling brine murmuring beneath the bows, as the ship cleaves the waters and sends them foaming forth to mark, as it were, her triumphant track;—still these, the combined effects of rapidity of motion, produce invariably in the sons of the sea, the same excitement which the learned lexicographer was wont to experience when snorting steeds were responding to the crack of willing whips.

Between seven in the evening and nine at night was the only interval during the twenty-four hours in which after the dreary and monotonous duties of the day, relaxation on board the Nonsuch was ever allowed.

At this,—

"The witching time of night."

the *belles* aboard (who, to their credit be it said, ever exerted their best endeavours to convert moping into merry men,) were to be seen attired in their always becoming,

and often captivating "shorts,"\* dancing away in the waist; and despite of the rolling, lurching, and pitching of the ship, reeling with Bob and Bill, "setting" to Sam, and "footing it fine" to some such favourite lilt as "Off-she-goes," "Jack's Delight," "Nancy Dawson," "Morgan Rattler," or any other rattler, which "Black Pompey," "Marc Anthony," or "Julius Cæsar," (for Nero never fiddled afloat,) was able to "scrape-up, or knock-off," in the way of a rattling reel.

In the other localities of the ship, different scenes and different sports might attract the eye. But the inmates of the ward-room seldom indulged in mirth. On this evening, however, this memorable evening (for the "parson over-board" was, indeed, an epoch in naval life) things took a livelier turn. The Members of the Upper House condescended to unbend a little, and follow the more pliable and popular forms of the Commons in the cockpit. With the exception of Bung and Dunanney, who had paired off, having no desire to come twice in twenty-four hours in collision with the opposition leader, (for it must be borne in mind, that the first lieutenant was not Sir Montague's nominee—the baronet could never find a "first" to follow, much less to *lead* him)—with the exception of the two "dissentients," sullen, and ill at ease, every member of the Upper House (proxies are not permitted afloat) voted in favour of the master's motion, to convert Wednesday evening into *Saturday night*.

Leatherlungs took the chair and the vocal lead, commencing with

"Cease, rude Boreas, blustering railer :"

a performance which, though received by his peers with peals of applause, was, nevertheless, little relished in a "higher quarter." Before the blustering railer had ceased to roar, dissentient sounds were heard overhead. In other words, ere the vocalist had reached his second verse, not only had the captain rang his bell, but had also

\* In blue-water, Jane imitates "Jack," doffs her long togs, and charms in her cruising rig. On long cruizes the short cut is found to be saving to soap. Soiled ladders and wet decks favour not the "tail," which only acts the part of swab, and does the dirty work.

despatched a missive, requesting that Mr. Leatherlungs would not sing so loud, for that he was trying to get a little sleep.

The vocalist ceased to sing-out—the piano was not *his* forte.

Hardly had the consequential coxcombical black ambassador, with the white shirt and flowing frill, delivered his message, withdrawn, and closed the ward-room door, ere Lawrence, in a dramatic tone, delivered the line—

“His sleeps are hinder’d by thy railings.”

“My railings!” ejaculated Leatherlungs.

“So says Shakspeare.”

“Mr. Shakspeare, parson, may say what he pleases; but it strikes me, that trying to keep awake, is a precious sight harder work than trying to ‘get a little sleep.’ By the Immaculate Man, a dormouse is a watch dog compared to *some* of us. What say you, Gorge? Eh, General?”

Gorge, who was doomed, according to his several messmates’ familiarity of mood, to be addressed by the ever varying title of “General,” “Colonel,” “Major,” “Captain,” and sometimes “Captain of the *Corps*” made no reply. The General’s “top-lights,” as Muddle observed (for so was the master called,) were already on the blink.

“Well, to-morrow,” said Leatherlungs, still harping upon the prohibitory message from aloft; “to-morrow, I suppose, we shall have a written order on the subject as long as the main-to’-bowline.”

“Surely, Leatherlungs,” said the gentle Johnny, “surely, you can’t suppose such a step can be ever contemplated?”

“Look here, Johnny! So sure as your old dad, the reverend rector, will give his vote for *some* of us at the next election, so sure will his son, before he’s twenty-four hours older, have to sign his scratch to an order for prohibiting singing at sea.”

“Well, individually,” returned Giles, “it will give me little or no concern; for, though passionately fond of music, I seldom or never indulge in soft strains.”

"The devil you don't. I say, Johnny, what d'ye call, 'Please, Mr. Brown, stand by *the* hammocks?'" said Leatherlungs, imitating his messmate's drawling delivery.

"I say, Johnny, what d'ye call that, eh?"

A peal of laughter at Johnny's expense produced another ring from aloft.

Again the strutting steward approached the chair.

"Sir Moundigee gib his caumlins, tank gemmen not laap so loud—caunt sleep,"

"Neither can I," returned Leatherlungs, sneeringly.

"Don't seem to try, sar."

"D——n your trials, sir! No talk. Top your boom. Discipline of the ship's going to the very devil!"

At the latter observation, despite of the mighty message from aloft, Lawrence burst into a loud laugh.

"You may laugh, parson," said Leatherlungs; "but recollect, you're laughing without *leave*."

"When the laugh requires leave, 'tis time to leave the laugh."

"I say, parson, where did you get that, eh?—out of the book of Job?"

"No, Job is not quite so antithetical."

"Holloa! What ship's that?" interrupted the Master.

"Job," continued Lawrence, "Job would have said, 'Upright men shall be astonished at this;\*' and might have added, 'but I have understanding as well as you: I am *not* inferior to you.'"

"Then I can tell you, parson," returned Leatherlungs, "Mr. Job would be precious out in his reck'ning,—would n't he Master?"

"In course he would," responded Muddle.

Lawrence again laughed.

"You may laugh, parson; but I'll show you," said Leatherlungs, "that Mr. Job knew nothing of the matter. Look here: the captain, we'll say, 's ashore——"

"Would that he was!" said Lawrence, aside.

"Very well—would *you* think," continued Leatherlungs, "of rigging the Church† without *my* permission?"

\* Job, chap. xvii. v. 8.

† The professional phrase officially employed, when directions are given to prepare afloat a place for the performance of Divine worship.



"Assuredly not."

"Would n't you say, coming up to me on the quarter-deck,—I say, Leatherlungs, a sermon to-day, or the service only?—Well, what would I say?"

"I know very well what *you* would say," interposed the parson.

"What?"

"Why, 'Cut it short.'"

"Well, then, to cut it short;—does n't that clearly prove that the first lieutenant's the parson's superior officer?"

"Indisputably," returned Lawrence, with affected gravity; "and equally proves, that the first lieutenant possesses the superior mind."

The conversation now took another turn.

"I say, Johnny," said Leatherlungs, addressing his mild messmate at the bottom of the table, "I say, Johnny, how comes on the *Gatherum-Gay*?"

The "*Gatherum-Gay*" was a sort of record or register of the ward-room wit, the guardianship of which devolved upon the gentle Giles.

"It makes very little advance indeed. Nobody has said a good thing these last ten days," returned the registrar, in a very matter-of-fact tone.

"No wonder," said Lawrence: "Muddle's not half so dry as he was wont."

"Something like you, parson—wet work don't agree with me. Talking of wet work," continued Muddle, "I say, parson, how did you feel when overboard?"

"Like a man in the water."

"Why, I do n't suppose you felt like a man in the mud. But did n't you think it was all up with you?"

"No, quite the reverse."

"The deuce you did?"

"Yes,—I thought it was all *down* with me."

"Down! *down* with that, Johnny," roared Leatherlungs. "Not sharp enough, Johnny. Never fill the *Gatherum*, if you do n't listen to Lawrence."

"Lawrence," returned Giles, "Lawrence reserves his best jokes for the cockpit. Indeed, his happiest moments are always when below the lower deck."

"*Very natural*, too," said Lawrence: for

'Know thou this truth, (enough for man to know);  
Virtue alone is *happiness below*.'

"Happiness below," said Leatherlungs: "what d'ye call happiness below?—skylarking with a parcel of beardless boys. Come, come, parson, that wont do. And, after all, is n't it far more natural for a man here to be merrily in the ward-room with his messmates, than joking below between wind and water."

"Doubtless! Look at Gorge," said the Chaplain, suppressing a smile.

Gorge was not like the Baronet above, *trying* to repose,—his chin was already buried in his chest. "The Captain of the Corpse" had "beat the General," and was then snoring to the tune of "Go to bed, Tom."

At this juncture, the Master-at-arms entered the ward-room for the purpose of "reporting" the extinction of the "young gentlemen's lights in the cockpit."

"Very good," responded the first lieutenant, with a patronising nod of the head.

Now it would have been something the very reverse of "very good," had Leatherlungs been less in the dark touching the verity of the wily "Warrant's" official report. But *Old Fire-and-Lights*, as the Master-at-arms was styled by the Members of the Lower House, was too long accustomed to treat with the Commons, not to have imbibed a little of their characteristic diplomacy. Much has been said of Talleyrand's political craft, strategy, and state subtlety; but, in comparison, that prince of politicians would have been dubbed a peddling protocolist, when estimated with the deeper diplomatists of the cockpit and cable tier. How midshipmen have been so long withheld from His Majesty's councils, appears to be one of those unaccountable prejudices which so often clog the wheels and impede the workings of our state policy. That a powerful maritime state should be deprived of the wit and wisdom of the waters, is, to say the least of it, an oversight of the blindest cast.

What a model for the head of our Marine Administration might not have been found in that immortal Mid, *Billy Culmer*! Of First Lords he would have been the *beau ideal*; and second to no man on the lady's list. With

what justice, ay, and with what jollity too, would he have dispensed his powerful patronage! What *seeds*\* would have been given at Whitehall! How many Blues in the morning would have been found under his Lordship's mahogany, instead of soon pacing the huge hall with long faces and short strides, performing the part of "Gentlemen in Waiting." Think, too, that he who had won for himself the all-honoured and revered title of "*Oldest of His Majesty's Mids*," would have suffered his brother "buffers" to pine in poverty, or to be passed over, because they had long "*passed*"—proved themselves fitted for their work, or shown themselves ready for fight, or any other fun, in the way of war. Not he! With Billy, too, no more cats would have been allowed on board than could catch mice. Every cur would have kept his watch; and every dog would have had his day.

But, to the lights below.

"Gold," says Shakespeare, "were as good as twenty orators." Had the poet ever served in blue water, he would have said that "gold" was dross, compared to the power of "saint-seducing" grog.

'Tis true that the master-at-arms (who, be it observed, is at all times more a master at locking legs,) had

"Put out the light, and then,"

accepting the proffered bribe, and swallowing a stiff "nor-wester," substituted for the "dowsed dip" his own official lamp. In short, "Old Fire-and Lights," who had been long esteemed by the Cockpitonians, as

"The cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,"

had retired from the Middy's berth, leaving behind him his horn lantern on the mess-table.

By such a subterfuge, the young gentlemen of the Nonsuch had often contrived to lighten their darkness.

\* Possibly our late revered Monarch borrowed a leaf out of the patriarch midshipman's book. Previously to his accession, when, as Duke of Clarence, he filled the post of Lord High Admiral, the officers of the naval service were constantly invited to splendid official dinners: a distinction they never enjoyed before or since. Billy Culmer had been an old menomate of His Majesty.

Indeed, at the very moment that the first lieutenant had turned a credulous ear to the master-at-arms' official report, Fuller, who had not been long released from the fore-topmast-head, was on his legs, assailing under cover of all the "rhetorical artifice" of which he was master—and he aspired to be considered the Cicero of the Commons—the conduct of his unconscious superior.

"I repeat," said he, "no party ought to be punished unheard; and, I again say, before certain persons accuse others of neglect of duty, and magnify into a blind-look-out a momentary escape of sight,—"

Here the air-sawing action of the orator's hand unfortunately upset the entire of the cherished contents of the cut-down decanter which stood upon the table—an accident which was received with the most discordant cries of "Chair, chair!"—"Try him, try him!"—"Cob him, cob him!" and sundry other unfriendly sounds and manifestations of unpopular feeling.

"But I know," proceeded Fuller, despite of his auditory's discouraging yells, "I know it all. Had I not been a *follower* of the captain—"("No, no!" from the opposition side.) "No, no! but I say yes, yes;\* and I say, moreover, had it not been for the noble and undaunted conduct of that—what shall I call him?—of that *prince* of parsons—"

Here the orator's eulogistic strain was stifled by a simultaneous burst of—

"Three cheers for Larking Larry."

"Hurrah!

Hurrah!!

Hurrah!!!"

"And one for coming up."

"Hurr—ah!"

This joyous clamour, so near to the purser's cabin, started Bung from his crib.

"Sentry," cried the disturbed accountant, addressing the unconcerned soldier pacing his post; for a "throat-seizing"† had already won over the marine to act upon

\* This plump negatur in the double affirmative form, which has been used with so much effect in "another place," originated with the commons afloat.

† A glass of grog.

the present principle of non-intervention; "sentry, what's all that noise about?"

"It's *only* the young gen'lemen, sir."

"The young gentlemen! What business have the young gentlemen with a light after nine o'clock?"

A passing meteor could not more rapidly have shot out of sight, than did the smuggled "glim" which had stood upon the middy's table. In the twinkling of an eye, the borrowed light was transplaced under cover of the boy's bucket.

"Thwack, thwack, thwack went three well directed shots from a biscuit battery in the midshipman's starboard berth, shivering the sentry's lantern, and extinguishing his pale and miserable luminary.

"By the good and gracious heaven," ejaculated the enraged Bung, "Sir Montague shall know this; 'tis too bad --too bad! Thus it is I am minus so many lanterns! Doctor Dunsomey! Doctor! D--n it, do man, open your door."

The loveliers took the hint. No sooner had the doctor's door fallen back upon its hinges, than a broadside of "midshipman's guts," followed up by a well-filled pudding-bag of ship's flour, were discharged in the due direction,--and with telling effect.

"Varry well, gentlemen! Pratty pranks!" cried Dunsomey, stepping forth from his cabin, with a lighted candle in his hand. "Varry becoming conduct, indeed, and a mesamate dying too!"

"I'm not dying, sir," exclaimed young Darcy, giggling with all the glee of a delighted lad, as he peeped his head over the side of his cot: "I'm as well as ever now."

"Hold yer tongue, ye young dog! D'ye thank, sir, ye know better than me? Lie down directly, or I'll--"

The doctor's threat was cut short by another fire, which had opened upon him from a masked battery in the direction of the larboard or opposite berth.

"Muster Bung, Muster Bung!" cried Dunsomey, in a tone indicative of greater distress than that in which the pursuer had supplicated the aid of his opposite neighbour. "I call on ye to witness this shameful and mutinous conduct on the part of the midshipmen of the ship."

*Bung had witnessed sufficient. Already had he hauled*

out of the line of fire—retreated,—and closed the door of his confined crib.

## CHAPTER VII.

“Thus we debate the nature of our seats.”

CORIOLANUS.

“Have you heard the argument? Is there  
No offence in’t?”

HAMLET.

THE Ball in the waist had broken up. The King’s Benchers, the galley logicians, the fore-castle and fore-hatchway “yarn-spinners” had already taken up their several seats. An unusually crowded group had congregated around the combings of the fore-hatchway in the waist. Weatherly and the seamen already mentioned by the *sobriquet* of “Pleasant Paul,” were already in deep debate.

“Well, I dun know, Paul,” said the quarter-master, replying to an observation which had fallen from his surly shipmate, “it seems to me, as we’re both on opposite tacks. I doe ’nt deny as he is n’t a very good man in his station. No man knows better his business; and we all knows when he *has* his way, and has his will, he handles the craft to an affigraffy; knocks her about like a cutter,—and can work her—ay, work through the very eye of a needle. But, still with all that, he wants it *here*, Paul,” said the veteran, pointing his fore-finger at least a hand-and-a-half below the region of his heart, “he wants what they calls a little o’ the ile o’ kindness, to smooth and ease the works within. Now look here, Mister Paul——”

“Who the —— are you *Mistering*?” interrupted Paul, in a surly tone.

“Well, I axes your pardon, *Pleasant Paul*.”

“I’m as pleasant as you please, so long as you keeps to civil words; but d—— me, you’ve no right to *Mister* a man for nothin’.”

“Well, now look here, Paul,” proceeded Weatherly, in a kindlier tone, “I axes you to splice an eye in a stiff,

closely laid-up piece of three, or three and-a-half; well, now d'ye thinks, as the strands 'oud so willingly open, if so be as you had n't a piece a' coaxing grease at the pint o' yer marl'nspike? Sartainly not. And so it is and ever was with a kindly word. But it 's never no use a-talkin'. A man *must* see the warsity side o' natur, afore he can bring his brains to bear in the nat'ral way. Moreover, they tells me he can't claim kin, cat, or kitten to mortal man, or livin' soul in the wide world——"

"So much the better," interrupted the uncouth Paul. "A chap as is n't free from friends, is never,—no, never worth a tinker's curse. D—— all favour and affection, say I. Give me the feller as sarves out all alike. And say what you will, old Badger-the-bo, I tells ye, the ship 'oud be twenty times worse nor she is, if it waunt for 'Bawlin' Bill.'"

It may be necessary to apprise the reader that "Bawling Bill" was the *sobriquet* which the first lieutenant's pulmonary talents had obtained for him on the lower deck.

"And what's more," continued the surly topman, "and I'd say it face to face, to every reefer afloat in the fleet, Bawlin' Bill was right,—perfectly right to make a sample o' both. No, no; a blind-look-out 's a blind look-out; you can't soften it one way or t'other. It's a fault, and a fault moreover I'd never forgive—*never!* I'm blest if I would n't mast-head my own mother for the sim'lar crime."

"Oh, if ye comes to call it a *crime*," said Weatherly, "it's time to clue up. I says no more."

"Crime! What else 'oud ye call it? Is n't it a crime to capsize the temper of the first leaftennant?"

"Temper!" interrupted Weatherly, "dash my wig, Paul, surely you are not the chap as now wants to talks o' temper?"

"Why not? Is't 'cause I speaks my mind like a man, I can't talk o' temper as well as a chap as uses an ily tongue, and snivels away like a sighin' catamaran as has a hankerin' after a he soger? Now, I axes you, or you, or any chap among ye as knows the difference atwixt a *Jew's-eye* and a double piece o' pork: now I axes ye all, *is n't it just as great a crime as any in the Articles o'.*

War, for any chap, (I does n't care who he may be, good, bad, or indifferent,) to cause the first leaftennant to clap on a mug o' misery, and to snarl at you, and at me, and every feller in the ship as comes athawt his hawse the rest o' the cruce?"

"Answer me *this*," returned Weatherly, waxing warm in debate: "is n't a little allowance to be made for a lad? Is n't a man a man? a boy a boy? and, damme, is n't natur natur? Look here, now. S'pose we'll say (just for a bit of an argyfication; no more, you know, nor what Mr. Muddle calls a case in pint;) s'pose, so be, the ship's corporal or master-at-arms fetches me a letter when I'm standin' at the conn. It comed, will say, by the Colpoys, the Pickle, or the Black-Joke, or any other small craft as comed from Plymouth. Well, I does n't hear from Nance, we'll say, for a matter of six months—may be more. Well, wou'd n't Natur say, 'Tom, take a peep, old boy, at Nance's fist, if only to see what she says of the brats?'"

"Tom, Natur'd get ye a precious blowing-up."

"Not a bit on it, Paul: and, moreover, tho' old Billy Blue had his buntin' at the main, ay, and pacing the quarter-deck, with all the skippers o' the fleet, in their best Sunday-swabs and three-corner scrapers, walking in his wake, I'm bless'd, but I'd think no more o' breaking Nance's seal, nor *you*, Paul, 'oud think o' breaking your liberty ashore."

"Then, if Natur would n't tell the officer o' the watch to heave ye clean off the gun, an' clap ye in the black list for the rest o' the cruce, then all I can say is, Paul Potter is never the chap as knows nothin' o' natur."

"But, I say, my hearty, is n't there two sort o' natures? Is n't there the natur o' the man, and the natur o' the beast?"

"And is n't there the natur' o' the sarvus?" retorted Paul. "Come, take the tarns out o' that, if ye can."

A third interlocutor now interposed. Long, or "Long-headed Bob" (as the ship's company called him for *shortness*) was one of the most distinguished debaters of the fore-hatchway forum. In every deck-discussion, he "bided his time," till he could pounce upon a point upon which to display his logical acumen.



"It does n't seem to me," says Long, "as either the one or the t'other o' ye sees the thing in the reg'lar light o' the law. Tom Weatherly, we all knows, was always a feller given to natur', and no wonder, natur' was always givin' to Tom. Twig his tie, and twig his teeth. But to me, the plain sailing o' the matter seems to be neither more nor less nor this—not whether mast-headin' the younker was right or wrong, or whether he falled overboard this way or that, or the t'other way, bekase you may as well say, when Bawlin' Bill sends Paul, or any other topman aloft to unreeve the to' gallan' studdensail geer, and the foot-rope goes, and *he* overboard, as Bill was to answer for the man's fall. The boy's fall was none o' the fault o' Bawlin' Bill; but, I'm d——d if it was n't *his* fault as there was n't a quarter-boat ready to lower! Why, if the parson had n't a' been fortently heav'd out o' the jolly, I'm beggered if Davy Jones wou'd n't a had it all his own way. I'm blest if he wou'd n't."

"Ah! that Larkin' Larry," exclaimed the topman, who had the look-out at the main-topmast head when the accident occurred, "that Larry's a capital chap! How so *good* a man as *he* comed to bear up for the church, is a reg'lar-built pauler to Tom. He never seems to care nothin' for no one. Blow high, blow low, there he goes, happy-go-lucky, laughin' on deck, and larkin' below. I'm blest, if I thinks there's a man or boy in the barkey as wou'd n't go for him, ay, a precious sight *farther* nor Fidler's Green! If you'd only a heard him a-hailin' the boy in the water. Talk of Bet Wilkinson's vice,\* I never heard such cheerin' sounds! I'm blest, if I was n't ready to heave myself clean off the cross-trees. In course, they'll give him a larger rate."

"A larger rate!" said Potter, indignantly; "if they does n't make him a reg'lar built bishop at once, then there's never a beggar at the board as desarves to get his blessin'."

"Oh, the skipper in course," said Weatherly, "will give him a lift. Yer parlimen' chaps, you know, can do more nor commission a bishop. Why, bless your hearts,

\* Jack invariably pronounces voice—"vice."

if they likes it, they can transmogrify a caulker, a sail-maker, a ship-chandler, or any chap in trade, (providin', you know, as he can give lip, and lay down the law,) into a reg'lar-built double-banked Lord-Mayor."

"Well, talkin' o' parliamen' chaps," said Potter, "I should like to hear some o' your arguficators lay down the law in the house. When a fellow has to make a speech five or six fathoms long, it's never no joke. A fellow, Tom, must, must, wet his whistle more nor once in a watch."

"Lord 'bless your heart," said Long-headed Bob, "I wouldn't turn my back agen the best spouter among 'em. Why, what is it, a'ter all? Look at the skipper. D'ye think I couldn't beat *he* any way, by or large? I tells ye, Paul, it's an easy trade; and that's the reason you sees so many chaps as tries to try it. Let a fellow only look larn'd, launch out a parcel o' long-winded words, prate upon nothin', and prate upon things he knows nothin' about, and like a deep-laden collier, kick up a bobbery under the bows 'thout advancing a fathom ahead in a watch; and I'm blest, if he isn't a match for the best parliment prater as ever prated himself into a good berth."

"All in the wind for'ard, sir," cried a voice from the forecastle.

"Up with the helm," cried the officer of the watch.  
"Flatten in for'ard."

"Blue light on the weather bow, sir."

"Ship ahead, sir, 's showing a light."

"Head yards are all aback, sir."

These cries, which proceeded from the forecastle, were followed in fast succession.

"Watch, wear ship," cried the lieutenant in charge of the deck. "Young gentleman, acquaint the captain that the wind's headed; and that the admiral's coming round on the other tack."

"Ay, ay, sir."

The sentry at the cabin door unhung his lantern, and accompanied the middy to the captain's cot.

"Sir Montague! Sir Montague! Sir Montague!" cried the reefer, or rather rouser, accompanying each increasing shout with a corresponding shake of the captain's cot.

"Good gracious! sentry, *I* can't wake the captain. Try what you can do."

"Sir Mounticue! Sir Mounticue! *Sir Mounticue!*" vociferated the hoarse orderly, shaking the senator by the shoulder, in a way which, in "another place," would have amounted to a breach of privilege. "He's worse nor ever, sir. Never seed him half so bad afore. Mr. Miller," continued the sentry, thrusting his lantern close up into the baronet's face, "this is somet more than usual, sir. Better, 'pon my word, sir, better send for the doctor."

"Holloa!" cried Sir Montague, starting from his sleep, "what the devil light is that?"

"A blue light on the weather-bow, sir," answered the young gentleman. "The admiral's taken aback, sir."

The captain was evidently more so.

"What youlg geltlema's that?"

"Mr. Miller, sir," replied the mid.

"Mr. Miller, the next time you thrust your light il my face, I'll face *you* to the mast-head."

"I couldn't make you hear, sir."

"What, *me*, sir? How dare you say so? No mal in the ship is so easily disturbed from his lateral rest. Away wi' you, sir; ald tell the officer of the watch to keep the ship il her statiol."

And so saying, Sir Montague again turned on his side to enjoy his "*lateral* rest."

## CHAPTER VIII.

"To make atonements and compromises."

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

"Wasting the air on promise of supply."

HENRY IV.

On the morning succeeding to the nocturnal riot in the Commons, a deputation, consisting of the mate of the main-deck, the mate of the hold, and Mr. Signal Midshipman Fuller, held a parley with the purser, touching cer-

tain charges which Mr. Bung had threatened to prefer against the "gentlemen of the cockpit."

Bung received the deputation in his cabin. On the part of "the gentlemen," it was argued, that a little hilarity and elevation in the lower regions were results to be looked for, upon the happy restoration of a messmate, and particularly when that messmate was not only a *midshipman*, but, perhaps, the most amiable and beloved youth that ever brushed boot, or pipe-clay'd a weekly account.

Mr. Leagur, the mate of the hold, descanted largely on his unremitting and undivided devotion to Mr. Bung's interests, and particularly his assiduity in preventing the ship's company indulging their mischievous propensity to injure and destroy the property of the purser.

"Gentlemen," said the gullible Mr. Bung, "though I am bound, both in duty and in honour, to support Sir Montague's discipline, and, indeed, the dignity due to *his* purser, still, out of consideration and personal respect for Mr. Leagur, I shall exert my little influence with Doctor Dunannee—than whom breathes not a more skilful or more excellent or amiable man—to drop the complaint. At the same time, I should hope, Mr. Leagur, that you will not relax your exertions in preventing the unexampled and infamous destruction of my property. See here, gentlemen," continued Bung, exhibiting a soiled and greasy scrap of paper, redolent of "condemned" cheese and rancid butter, "by this my steward's written return, five-and-twenty horn lanterns have been crushed to atoms within a little month."

"Sad destruction, indeed, sir," said Leagur, who with difficulty could compose his countenance, having himself contributed not a little to increase the crush.

"Ah! Mr. Leagur, if all in the ship were like *you*, I should have a better 'balance bill' at the end of the year. Well, gentlemen," added Bung, assuming all the consequence of a treasury clerk, "let it be now understood that the affair of last night, as far as I'm concerned, goes no further."

The deputation retired. Bung, however, had a word for the private ear of the mate of the hold.

"If your *case*, Mr. Leagur, is on the decline," whisper-

ed the purser, "you can have it replenished, you know. Apply to the steward: it's all right."

At seven bells, the mate of the hold had the best filled liquor case in the Little Liner.

Meanwhile, the duties on deck went on in their wonted way. It was now noon. The officer of the watch had reported to the captain in the cabin, that the admiral had made it twelve o'clock.

"Make it so," said the captain, confirming the admiral's command. "Pipe to diller; ald pray, Mr. Giles, let me be disturbed as little as possible."

"Very well, sir," replied the lieutenant, retiring.

"And, Mr. Giles," cried the captain, recalling the officer of the watch, "pray let there be lo walkilg on the poop. It is difficult to compose whel distracted by the tramp of feet overhead."

"It must, I'm sure," returned the courteous lieutenant. "I only wonder, sir, you can sleep at all with——"

"Sleep!" interrupted the baronet, "What do you meal, mal? I'm not talkil of sleep: I'm talkil of composil—composil a parliameltary paper."

The confused "follower" sought to apologise for his mistake; but he was interrupted by Sir Montague, who observed, that it was a very natural mistake, adding,—

"Mild, low, keep the poop quiet; for I promise you, Mr. Giles, it's lo joke to prepare a parliameltary bill. A mal *must* have his brails clear."

Now, in the last observation, although the sound accorded little with the sense of the speaker, yet more met the ear of the lieutenant than was intended to be conveyed by the captain's mouth. The driver was then set. This sail is taken in, and drawn into folds by running ropes, which are called brails; and as it is a common precaution, when the driver is set, to say, "See your *brails* clear abaft," the sound of the baronet's "brails," operating upon the brains of the simple-minded Giles, suggested the interrogation,—

"Shall we brail it up, sir?"

"What?"

"The driver, sir."

"Certainly, certailly: a very good thought too."

*Possibly, during Sir Montague's parliamentary career*

up to the present period, (and Heaven knows there has been of late no lack of stupidity in St. Stephen's) there could not be found in the Senate a being less competent than the captain of the Nonsuch "to move for leave to bring in a bill," much more compose a legislative act. But, independently of indulging his besetting weakness, of desiring to be considered a profound statesman by all afloat, Sir Montague had received a certain letter touching the expediency of bringing forward in the ensuing session, a "Turnpike-bill;" and, as Giles was the son of one of his most influential constituents, he was most anxious to impress "Johnny" with the belief that not only had he the interests of the borough at heart, but that he was also a most zealous, efficient, and pains-taking member of Parliament.

Sir Montague remained in his cabin the whole afternoon; nor had he been in any way disturbed, till the bugle-call had summoned him to dinner. Sir Montague's guests consisted of the first lieutenant, the purser, the junior marine-officer, and Mr. Midshipman Fuller; elements sufficient, after recent events, to constitute a pleasant party.

The cover of the soup-tureen had hardly been removed, ere Sir Montague, who plumed himself in the nicety of his nasal sense, detected a twang, as he termed it, which indicated something at fault in the culinary department.

"Holloa, steward! how 's this? The soup 's burlt."

"Burnt, sir?"

"Yes, burlt, sir!. Think I've lo lose? What say you Mr. Bulg?"

"I must say, sir, now that you put it to me, I think it is a leetle scorched."

"Scorched, ildeed. Steward, let the ship's corporal brill the cook aft directly."

The steward retired.

"Pol. my word, this is really too bad, Mr. Leather-lulgs; cal't you make me out a better cook?"

"He 's your own choice, sir. He 's none of mine," returned the first lieutenant, pointedly.

"Well, I lo that. What sort of cook have you got il the ward-room?"

"If possible, sir, he is worse than yours."

"Come, mile's lot sò bad, Mr. Leatherlungs," said the Baronet, in a tone which admitted of no mistake.

"Change with you, if you like sir," said Leatherlungs, who at once saw Sir Montague's drift.

"Lo, bad as he is, I've no desire to chalge for the worse."

The culprit now entered the cabin, under charge of the ship's corporal. The countenance of the cook underwent little alteration; he was already a gentleman of colour.

"How came you to burl the soup, sir?" asked the captain, angrily.

"Burn, Sir?"

"Burl, sir; yes, sir, is l't that Elglish?"

"Wou'd n't turn my back, Sir Maundigu, 'ticlarly in making pea-soup, to any captain's cook in the sarvus."

"Ship's corporal," said the baronet, "take that fellow forward, and see that he swallows every drop of soup coltailed in that tureel. I'll teach him what it is to be careless in cookil'. And do you hear, corporal, don't leave him, till he drails every drop!"

"Shall be done, Sir Montague," said the corporal, retiring with the prisoner, who had to carry forward to the galley the tureen and its punishable contents.

The steward had already repaired to the galley to hurry aft the rest of the dinner. But whilst the punishment of swallowing the soup was awarded to the cook in the galley, the party in the cabin were equally punished by having nothing to swallow.

Sir Montague tore at his bell.

The sentry had again despatched the messenger to recall the steward.

"Really, this is too bad," ejaculated the captain.

"Patience is a virtue, Sir Montague," said Bung, assuming what Leatherlungs was wont to term, "one of his best cabin-dinner smiles."

Pending this unlooked-for cessation of edible operations, the disappointed party appeared at their wits' ends, to dissipate the discouraging pause. The ends of the marine officer's sash had been twenty times twisted and twirled into imitative lays of three and four-stranded rope. Leatherlung's "short allowance of soft tack" (for the baronet was rather shy in the distribution of his

"daily bread") had been nearly expended in the formation of small balls, which, between the crossed position of the first and second finger of his dexter hand, he kept rolling in monotonous motion. The salt on the purser's right had been broken up, and reshaped, and patted, and smoothed again and again. Fuller had almost imagined himself a Mandarin, his eyes had been so long fixed on the Chinese figures which figured on the plate before him, whilst Sir Montague's arm raised in a perpendicular position, as his hand held the bell-pull overhead, was not a little fatigued in "ringing the changes" for the steward's return.

At length the steward re-entered the cabin.

"Well, sir," said Sir Montague, perceiving that the black was empty-handed, "where's the rest of the diller? Why the deuce don't you bril' it aft?"

"Caun't, sir."

"Caul't, sir! Why lot, sir?"

"Currie capsized, sar. Cook, too, sar, caun't move leg or limb. Blown up, sar, like a bladder o' wind. Ready to burst, sar. Poor man, very bad, sar—very bad, indeed, sar."

The steward's pitiable picture of the pea-soup swollen cook was too great a "draw" upon the risible muscles of a merry-minded Mid such as Fuller. Forgetful of time, place, and cabin decorum, the "young gentleman" fell into one of those uncontrollable titters, into which the most sombre are sometimes betrayed in situations unsuited to laughter, the very consciousness of which tends rather to increase than to repress the emotion. Nor were the features of the subaltern's face, who sat opposite to the signal Mid, altogether under military command.

"Pol my word, Mr. Fuller, I dol't see so much to laugh at. But it seems you like to ildulge il that vulgar vice. I'm sure, had you beel where your youlg mess-mate was yesterday evelilg, you would have laughed at the other side of your mouth. What thilk you, Mr. Leatherlulgs?"

Little was Sir Montague aware of the awkward position in which his interrogation had placed both Fuller and the first lieutenant. But secrets were not to be told out



of school. Leatherlungs thought the best way to blink the baronet's question was to shape one of his own.

"Don't you think, sir, 'twould be well to send down to the ward-room for a little cold meat, by way of a beginning?"

"Lot at all. We shall have plenty directly. O, here it comes."

The captain's coxswain, followed by a couple of long-tailed bargemen, brought aft the only *course* left, to stay the stomachs of the hungry group.

"Come, Mr. Leatherlungs, this is lot so bad, after all. I lo lothil better thal a cold leg of pork."

"Except when it is hot, sir, and with dog's body."

"*Dog's body!* Mr. Leatherlungs," said Sir Montague, iterating the lieutenant's words in a tone evidently intended to convey something more than surprise at the employment of such cant at court.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Leatherlungs, correcting himself, "I mean pease-pudding."

"Ah, that's alother affair. By the by, Mr. Leatherlungs," said the baronet, after asking the lieutenant to "take wine," "Dr. Dulalley tells me, it was learily all over with youlg Darcy yesterday."

"It *was* over with him, sir, in Mr. Dunanne's opinion."

"So, ildeed, he said. Well, to be sure, scielce, scielce, Mr. Bulg, will do wolders."

"Wonders, indeed, sir!" echoed the toady.

"Why, yes," said Leatherlungs, "Mr. Smith proved as much."

"Mr. Smith? Why, you dol't meal to say," said Sir Montague, "that Mr. Dulalley did lothil?"

"Mr. Dunanne did nothing," returned Leatherlungs, "because he said there was *nothing* to be done."

"Oh, that was merely, Mr. Leatherlungs, merely what the French call his *façon de parler*."

"I'm no *Frenchman*, thank God," said the first lieutenant, with wicked emphasis; "but I know this, when a medical man pronounces another dead, it's pretty plain English that there's nothing more to be *done*."

"Clever mal, Mr. Leatherlungs. Lext to a good captail,

I lo lot a greater blessil to a mal of war, than the possesiol of a good surgeol."

Apprehensive that Leatherlungs might push the resuscitation case to the prejudice of his friend Dunanney, the purser turned the conversation to a subject more congenial to the baronet's taste.

"I suppose, sir," said Bung, "Parliament will meet early on the ensuing session?"

"So early, Mr. Bulg, that this very day I've beel busy at work preparil' a very importalt bill. 'Tis a terrible tax upon a mal's time to have a seat in Parliamelt. The mild, the mild, Mr. Bulg, is constaltly on the stretch."

"And the body too," thought Leatherlungs.

"A heavy weight, no doubt, sir," said the sycophantic Bung.

"'Tis a serious thil', Mr. Bulg, the colsideratiol of state affairs."

"It must, indeed, sir," returned the purser.

The cloth had been already removed, and Leatherlungs having swallowed his third glass of the baronet's best port, became the more disposed to sink the recollection of the check which his vocal performance had so recently received.

"I hope, sir," said he, assuming an earnestness of tone befitting his subject, "I hope, sir, Parliament will now do something for the Service, for it has always appeared to me, that, instead of the Navy being its *first* consideration, it is the last thing that is ever thought of."

"Mr. Leatherlulgs," returned the senator, with all the assumption of oracular authority, "Mr. Leatherlulgs, you are just like all others who talk ol matters to which they have lot givel due colsideratiol."

"That's exactly what I say, sir; due consideration has never been given to the subject of bettering the condition of the Service. And I believe it to be the general feeling afloat."

Here the senator rather testily observed, that there *should* be no feeling afloat upon the matter; that the feeling of Parliament was the only legitimate feeling of the nation, adding, in a tone which partook of personal retort, "the fact is, Mr. Leatherlulgs, you with others have

yet to learn, that the time has not arrived to place the Service on a better footing."

"Then, sir," returned Leatherlungs, emphatically, "if now, during the middle of a hot war the time has not arrived to do justice to the Service, it is not very likely the time ever *will* arrive."

What a true prophet has Leatherlungs proved? Since the date of this discussion, what boon has been conferred on the Service? In what way has state policy, acting even upon the principle of reciprocity, extended its protection to the best protectors of the State? And, in what way has national gratitude manifested a feeling in favour of the natural defenders of the land? How many selfish and sinister-minded "Mutes" have, since Sir Montague's day, slept in the Senate, and prostituted their political votes to the prejudice of their own profession!

Senators pertaining to the medical, the military, and the learned professions, feel a proper and becoming pride in putting forth the claims and supporting the best interests of their respective bodies; nor fail they ever, when permitted the opportunity, to repel the slanderous and libellous assertions of daring demagogues. Such senators well merit the distinctive, though too often abused, appellation of "Honourable Members;" for they honour and alike are honoured by the professions to which they severally pertain, and severally serve.

But with disagreeable topics a truce.

The "allowance" of wit and wine had now been nearly "expended;" but, as Sir Montague was mounted on his hobby, or as Leatherlungs had subsequently phrased it, was "leaning over on his eternal parliamentary tack," the first lieutenant had determined to give him a rub ere he rose to depart.

"Well, I only wish I was in Parliament," said Leatherlungs, in a seriousness of tone which extracted from the silent sub a look very trying to Fuller's command of feature.

"Mr. Leatherlungs, you would charge your tale, I promise you," said the senator, "were you to experience the fatigue and trouble attendant on the discharge of a Member's duty."

"I suppose, sir," said Leatherlungs, affecting an air of

ignorant simplicity, "I suppose, sir, it is not *much* more fagging than the duties of first lieutenant of a line-of-battle ship."

This was a floorer. Sir Montague could not have been more silent had a brother-officer's conduct been assailed in St. Stephen's.

"And if I was in Parliament," continued Leatherlungs, "the first motion I should make would be to increase the pay of the first lieutenant."

"Thel, I fear, Mr. Leatherlungs, your moti<sup>o</sup>l would meet with very little support."

"Not, sir, if in the same motion I proposed to raise the salary of the First Lord of the Admiralty?"

"Ah! it's very easy talkil', Mr. Leatherlungs."

"Why, I believe, sir," returned Leatherlungs, "it would require some little of *talk* to increase the pay of the first lieutenant; but very, very few words, indeed, to add to the salary of the First Lord."

And so saying, he rose from the table, and, with the rest of Sir Montague's guests, retired from the cabin.

## CHAPTER IX.

"To Nature none more bound."

HENRY VIII.

"Now we speak upon our cue, and our voice is imperial."

HENRY V.

POSSIBLY in no state or station of life is to be found a being less entitled to commiseration than the self-important and supercilious commander afloat, when under erroneous and narrow-minded notions of the dignity due to command, he, for hours and hours, inflicts upon himself the penal torture of solitary confinement. Sir Montague was not like many of the enlightened and distinguished of his brother officers then serving in the same fleet, who were wont to dissipate a dull hour by joining in a rubber of whist in the ward-room. No; this, to use the hack-nied phrase of the present day, would indeed, have been "*infra dig.*"

For four hours and upwards had the baronet been reduced to the unenviable position of being turned over to his own society, shrunk into his natural dimensions, and haunted by the spectre Self. Already had he counted, and he knew not why, the several "bells" which had indicated the six heaviest half-hours of the first watch. From the hour of eight to that of eleven at night was always, with the senator, when serving afloat, an awful interval, it being invariably one of self-imposed solitude; but upon this night it was a period which carried with it a torment amounting almost to intolerable loathing. His *siesta*, which had been unusually protracted, had already robbed him of his "lateral rest." Sleep he could no longer: nor longer recline on his sofa. How to occupy himself he knew not. His steward, however, was summoned to his aid.

The yawning Black was immediately at his elbow.

"Bril me, my dressil-gowl aid slippers,—aid,—the order-book."

The Black administered to his master's wants.

"Wait in the fore-cabill till I have writtel the light orders."

On this occasion the Baronet's "*light orders*" were unusually heavy. They ran as follows.—

"H. M. ship Nonsuch, July— 180—.

"Mems.

"Keep the ship in her station, and follow the admiral's motions during the night. Call me in the event of any change of wind or weather; also the first lieutenant and master, should the admiral make the signal to tack or wear.

"I desire as little noise as possible may be made over my head, upon the poop. The unnecessary noise, made last night, was quite insupportable.

"Instead of calling aloud 'weather-quarter' and 'lee-quarter,' the look-out men abaft will report every half-hour to the signal midshipman of the watch. The first lieutenant is to be informed that it is *my* desire, the poop be not stoned, washed, sprinkled, nor scrubbed, nor in any way wetted in the morning watches till further orders.

"The officer of the watch is to call me *himself*. Young gentlemen are not competent to make reports, or to call the captain.

"MONTAGUE MUTE, Captain."

These orders were not so readily ran off as the reader may imagine. In their concoction so much of time had been expended, that the "black gentleman" in waiting began to think that his master's muse was something like his mistress in the morning—rather "slack in stays."

The clasp of the order-book was at length closed, and the steward despatched with it to the officer of the watch.

The night was soft and beautifully serene. There was a light breeze; barely sufficient to lull the set sails to sleep. The fleet was formed in two columns,—the ship's pertaining to each line sailing in succession; and in "order" unusually close. Those of the weather column presented to the spectator in the lee-line a scene strikingly picturesque, as the moon, which shone brightly in the east, silvered the surface of the gently undulating sea. The lunar rays falling upon the bleached and weather-worn canvass of the several vessels as they were gliding stealthily along in each other's wake, gave to the slumbering sails of each ship a dazzling whiteness,—opposed as they were to a long unbroken bank of black clouds, which had risen in the western horizon, and which in altitude still seemed to increase.

The tranquil character of the scene, together with the balmy breath of night, and the stillness which pervaded every quarter of the ship, seemed eminently calculated to invite contemplation. But for such scenes, Sir Montague had little taste; and with him,

"Thinking was an idle waste of thought."

To conceive that objects which contributed so much to the beauty of the scene—objects so symmetrical in form—so graceful in motion—so, silent, tranquil, and seemingly pacific, could so readily become monster machines of human destruction, were not thoughts likely to turn the baronet's brain.

Not so the quarter-master of the watch. Weatherly had an eye to the picturesque, or rather for "natur," which he constantly confounded with art. Since he had been relieved from the conn (for he had kept the ship "full and by" the first two hours of the watch,) he had seated himself on the arm chest which stood "cleated" in close contiguity with the captain's skylight abaft on the poop. By his side sat the signal midshipman of the watch.

"Look there, Mr. Fuller," said Weatherly, pointing to the white sails of the weather line, which were standing in bold and bright relief against the dark back-ground already described; "look there—there's natur' for ye: there's a sight, now, you could never see ashore—never! There's the moon too, in full fig', lookin' as pleased as Punch,—glitterin' away, and takin' the shine, for all the world like one o' yer fine-feathered ball-room birds, bent 'pon strikin' comical some old copper-coloured, rupee-freighted buffer from Bengal or Bombay. There's the very feller in her phiz, the very man in her mug,—as plain, ay, as plain as the livin' light. Well, there you sees her, and sees her too, on her good-tempered tack. Now face round."

Fuller was nodding.

"Holloa! young gentleman, top-lights beginnin' to blink. No use, ye know, my larning ye to know natur', if ye keeps yer pate on the droop like a chap in church."

"Go on, old fellow; I'm quite awake," said Fuller, rousing himself up.

"Well, now look to windward, and see how she shows her sense; for some how or other, when natur's good natur'd, she never shows nothin' but sense: but just see how she 'fleets all her spare light on the weather line; and why? cos the admiral leads the line, and, in course, he as leads, it stands to reason, should have most light to show the way. Very well, then, that's natur' steering a steady course, and payin' out sense astarn. Then, again, look at that thunderin' bank brewin' up on the weather-beam o' the weather-line, lookin' as long and as black as the whole starboard-watch six-water-grogg'd for a week. Well, now, that's nothin' more nor less nor natur' tryin' to get up a growl."

"Growl, old fellow!" said Fuller, who had already succeeded in throwing off his drowsy fit. "Why, I thought you just now said, that Nature was disposed to be good-natur'd to-night."

"Lord bless your heart, she's sometimes as fickle as a breedin' breeze. She's the very model o' my Nance, and *she's* as many minds in a minute as *I* has in a month. Her thoughts keep flyin' and knockin' about, for all the world like a dog-vane veerin' in a calm. 'Tom,' says she, three or four days afore the last pay-day at Plymouth,—'Tom,' says she, 'as it's a fine day to day,' says she, 'I thinks I can't do better,' says she, 'nor mend yer shirts for ye, afore the ship sails.' Well, there was open and overhaul the bag, and turn out on the mess table ev'ry rag o' riggin'. But mind ye, no sooner she threads her needle, nor she throws it aside, leavin' the shirts to shift for 'emselves; and, luggin' by the laniard her scissors out of her pocket, as was crammed chock-a-block with bits o' bees' wax, brass buttons, hanks o' thread, length o' tape, crooked coppers, and all manner o' combustibles, she tarns to, to cut up, and convert my best mustrin' trowsers into reg'lar-built breeks for the boy Bill."

"Well, but old fellow, Bill's breeks has nothing to say to the bank brewin' to wind'ard."

"I axes *your* pardon, Mr. Fuller; give yerself time to think, and you'll soon see as Tom Weatherly always goes the right way to work to bring his meanin' to a small helm. Now, as I said afore, that there dark bank is nothin' more nor Natur' gettin' up a growl. Summet's displeased her. She's out o' sorts. She can't stand it. She sulks. She's jealous,—jealous, mayhap, o' the man i' the moon. She does n't like his smilin' mug. She thinks he's playin' her false. She can't abide the thought. She knits her brow, frowns at the feller, and does her best to look as black as blazes."

"Talking of the moon, old fellow," said Fuller, who could now with difficulty refrain from laughing aloud, "I see, by the Almanack, we shall shortly have a total eclipse."

"Oh, ye must n't talk to me o' yer eclipses; up the Straits is the station to see they. In carnal-time, you'll see the moon clap a mask on her mug, and go masquer-



radin' with all the rest of the world. Then, you know, she's in, what ye may call, a frolicksome fit. There now—there's a lesson for ye, young gemmen—a lesson yer schoolmaster never could larn ye. He may larn ye the rule o' three, and the rule o' thumb; but wherever's the use of the one or the tother, when ye knows no more o' Natur' or the way she works nor a braying donkey does o' mixing doeboys, or makin' a mess o' lobscouse."

Weatherly had hardly concluded his edifying lecture, ere his eye caught the reflection of a light in the fore-cabin of the captain.

"Hilloa! Mr. Fuller," exclaimed the naturalist in a tone of surprise. "Hilloa! the skipper's got a light in the fore-cabin. I thought he'd turned in long ago."

"So thought I," said Fuller.

"There's summet in the wind, that's sartain."

"Suppose we take a peep," said the signal mid.

Weatherly and Fuller approached the sky-light with stolen step. Each peeper, apart, took up a cowering position. Fuller, face down, sought to watch from the windward; whilst the old stager assumed an attitude to leeward of the sky-light, which the better enabled him to observe the senior officer's movements.

"I'm blest," said Weatherly, in a half whisper, "I'm blest, if he is n't larnin' to box: he is, to a sartinty,—sure as my name's Tom. Oh! it's as plain as a pikestaff. See, there's a reg'lar-built right-handed hit; and yet too, on t' other tack," added the veteran interrogatively, "for why does he hold his larboard flipper behind his back?"

"Nothing of Nature there, old fellow," said Fuller, splitting his sides at Weatherly's remarks.

"I say, Mr. Fuller, what the flames is he at?"

"Well, I'll tell you old boy," said Fuller, suppressing his laughter. "He's only at his old tricks. He used to do the same in the last ship."

"Tricks?" said Weatherly.

"Yes, he's practising a preamble for a motion."

"Then it must be a French motion; for his starboard flipper's at work, for all the world like one o' the arms o' the telegraph on Pint St. Mathew's."

"Stuff, old thyst-and-no-higher. I tell you," said Fuller, *fearing that Weatherly's remarks would spoil sport,*

"I tell you, once for all, he's only spouting—practising a speech for parliament."

"My precious eyes!" exclaimed the quarter-master. "What a go!"

"You remain quiet," said Fuller, "and I'll give Mr. Toms a bit of a treat."

Here Fuller rose on tip-toe, and proceeded to the officer of the watch, who stood musing at the end of the weather waist netting.

Toms was the junior lieutenant of the ship, and too recently promoted from the cockpit not to enjoy a joke. Following Fuller softly on the poop, and creeping to leeward of the skylight, he secured a position to satisfy himself, that the signal mid had kept a far better look-out on the captain than on the admiral.

"Well," cried the officer of the watch, "this is capital—capital! Could 'nt have believed it, had 'nt I seen it with my own eyes. Keep quiet a bit: I'll soon capsize his spouting."

Toms now descended the poop, and with cautious step entered the cabin, unaided by the sentry's light. The baronet was in high oratorical rant. The table before him resounded to the telling thumps of his dexter hand. Perceiving that the captain was too warm in his work to detect his entry, Toms retreated a couple of paces, in order that he might catch the substance of the senator's speech.

"I say, sir," said the orator emphatically, "it is a gralt—a gralt—to which parliament—parliament should accede. By such toll—by such toll, I say, the streets would be kept il proper repair—proper repair—the towl—the towl lit; and the ilhabitalt, His Majesty's subjects—yes, sir, His Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects—no lolger—lolger left il darkless."

"It looks very *dark* to wind'ard, sir," said the officer of the watch, stepping forward, and taking the baronet aback with his own cue.

"Who's that? What—what? Well! Oh, it's *you*, Mr. Toms. Well, sir, what's the matter?"

"It looks, sir, I say, very *dark* to wind'ard."

"Well, sir, suppose it does?" said the senator, not a little mortified in being detected in oratorical practice.

"The night orders, sir," returned the lieutenant, "direct that you are to be called in the event of any change of wind or weather."

"Has the wild chalged, sir?"

"No, sir."

"Has the weather chalged, sir?"

"Not yet, sir, but it threatens."

"Thel, sir, I'll trouble you," rejoined the baronet, in an angry tone, "not to threatel *me* until there's a chalge of both."

With this retort the officer of the watch withdrew, satisfied that, although the captain had the best of the argument, the lieutenant had the best of the joke.

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## CHAPTER X.

"War—war—peace is to me a war."

KING JOHN.

THE spring of the year 1805 commenced with presages of actual business on the part of France, which contributed not a little to dispel the deep and lowering gloom which so long had hung over our wooden walls. Pending the greater part of the preceding year, "grim-visaged comfortless despair" saddened the Service to its very soul. From the shoals of the Texel to the depths of Toulon, there was not to be found serving in a single British blockader a solitary tar who was not impressed with the dispiriting belief, that "chance had been choked in the luff," and that a "*wing-stopper*" had been put upon every probable prospect in the way of fight.

Of what avail was vigilance, when light food, heavy fag, anxious days, dreary nights, and months of misery, were to end only in

"Vanity and vexation of spirit!"

Perish the thought! And so thought every tar who preferred to perish in a pleasanter way.

*But brighter hopes began to beam. The constant*

"reports," and thick-coming and accredited rumours of the enemy's contemplated movements and migratory flights, infused in every watching squadron and blockading fleet, a lightness and buoyancy of feeling, which we never again can expect to witness on the waters. Hope was in every heart, and life in every limb. Tails, which had been long on the droop, resumed their wonted "kink," and the "love-locks," which had hung sleek and straight and had lengthened with the wearer's length of face, again coiled themselves up into curt "curl," and again looked the locks of

"Love and glory."

Duties, too, which were wont to be felt as harassing and heavy labour, were now regarded as light and cheering recreation; and every descried sail and *un*-discerned signal excited a curiosity unbounded in the crew of every craft, from the smallest lugger to the largest liner in the fleet.

But alas! how contrasted was the feeling ashore with the feeling afloat. A total interchange of grievance appeared to have been effected between the sons of the sea and fathers of the soil. The same causes which had so essentially contributed to dispel despondency afloat, had now produced it ashore in a tenfold degree.

Information had already reached the Admiralty, that Villeneuve had eluded the vigilance of Nelson; that he had passed the Straits of Gibraltar, driven our squadron from off Cadiz, formed a junction with Gravina, and that the Franco-Spanish fleet had proceeded untraced on some grand and secret expedition.

The merchants and shipowners of London, Liverpool, and Bristol, were trembling for the several "ventures" and vessels on the high seas, their floating capital, and capital afloat; whilst the lords of the land and croakers of the coast were nightly disturbed by dreams of invasion, and ravings of the rapine and plunder of the "Invincible Legion." Nor were the speculations and conjectures of the contemporary press calculated to allay alarm. The opposition journals pronounced it to be the policy and

purpose of Napoleon to embark an overwhelming military force ; to collect at a given period and given rendezvous, all his fleets and flying squadrons, and then to strike somewhere a heavy blow.

Where that *somewhere* was, became a question, indeed, of difficult solution. Some thought our colonies in the west were menaced—others, our possessions in the east. Whilst the timid, who stood still, and sighed for the safety of their acres, were under awful apprehension that England was the object of attack, no inconsiderable portion of the patriotic descendants of St. Patrick indulged in the hope that the preference would be given to the "Sister Isle." Still preparations to repel assault assumed every possible shape, and volunteers to serve the king and protect the state figured in every possible form. Sea fencibles and land defenders were every where to be seen under daily drill ; whilst martello towers, springing up like mushrooms, were rearing their round heads on every strand, point, and plain heretofore considered unprotected.

Nor was the position of the minister one altogether of envy. Whilst his political responsibilities were multiplying in a ratio proportionate to the difficulties opposed, the premier had been deprived of his best support : his ablest colleague and firmest friend had already been compelled to resign office. This, indeed, was felt as a bitter blow.

But what were the cares and troubles of the land to the anticipated pleasures of the sea ? The work on the waters promised a livelier turn ; and wear, and tear, and drag, and sag would, it was hoped, be repaid with—fight and fun.

Moreover, at Whitehall matters had already assumed an aspect more pleasing and cheering to the Service. A "blue-jacket" had taken his "trick at the helm," and had now to try his hand at the "trick of state."

The new First Lord was the last on the list of lords ; for, to fit him the better for his berth, he had been purposely promoted to the peerage. Heretofore his lordship had presided at a "civil" board : a board celebrated for its courtesies ; and at which sat official foes, disguised as "affectionate friends."\*

\* At this board, when, from an unforeseen occurrence, an error had crept into the "accounts" of some careless captain or unlettered boat.

But the first lord was no longer an "affectionate friend." His affections departed on his peerage; and his friendships, as a matter of course, fled on his assumption of office. And well it were so. A stand was to be made to save the state; and, as talent, energy, and courage were the only auxiliaries that could possibly be turned to available account, Favour and Affection were laid upon the shelf, till national tranquillity and political repose were *again* to restore them to sinecure service.

Not so at the Admiralty. Never before or since had been manifested such promptitude in the decision of measures to thwart and defeat the enemy's designs.

Pending Nelson's pursuit of Villeneuve—(whom the former had traced to the West Indies, and had routed from the tropics with an infinitely inferior force,) his lordship, with his accustomed forethought and consideration of the national weal, had despatched the *Curieux*, Captain By—n Bettes—th (fighting Bettes—th,\* as this gallant youth was wont to be called) with the earliest intelligence touching the enemy's return to Europe. The *Curieux* arrived at Plymouth early on the morning of the 7th of July; and, on the following night, as the church clock in the vicinity of Charingcross had chimed the third quarter after eleven, Bettes—th reached the Admiralty-gate in a chaise and four.

Unwilling to lose a moment, or to await the dilatory process of throwing open the heavily bolted portal, Bettes—th, breathless to deliver his despatches, pulled up without the walls, threw himself out of the chaise, and, entering the Admiralty-hall with hurried step, pounced upon the porter, sound asleep in his canopied and comfortable chair of state.

swain, the unfortunate defaulter, on receiving the amicable hint, that "an impress had been placed against his pay," had to console himself with the satisfactory reflection that the document was signed by three *affectionate friends*, such as—

"We are, sir,

Your affectionate friends,

SAMUEL SWRATHEN,

GEO. SCREWEN,

FRANCIS GRINDALL."

\* The gallant young officer subsequently fell in battle in the command of a fine frigate.

"Holloa, my hearty, hard and fast. Rouse, rouse-and-bit," cried the bustling captain, shaking the snorer by the collar of his coat. "Wake up, man, and announce the arrival of despatches."

Rousing up, and leisurely opening his eyes, the head of the hall "overhauled" the intruder from head to foot.

"Come, what the devil are you looking at? Rise, sir, and away, and report the arrival of despatches."

"Too late for business now, sir," replied the drowsy porter. "My lord's retired to rest."

"And therefore you are determined to follow his example."

"I know my place, sir."

"So it seems. Come, sir, there's no time for talk. Let these despatches be instantly given to the secretary, and say that Captain Bettes—th awaits an audience."

"The secretary's down at the House, sir; but they shall be laid upon the table; and, in course, he'll get 'em the moment he returns."

Now the secretary was *not* "down at the House." The man of letters was "keeping up the farce" in "another place." He was then at the Haymarket, grinning at Munden's grimaces. But the parliamentary phrase of "laid upon the table" was in itself sufficient to induce the tired traveller to follow the fashion, and retire to rest. Bettes—th was soon stretched upon the best bed the chambermaid of the "Salopian" could offer to the "captain."

On the secretary's return from the theatre, the despatches were eyed with a drowsy eye; and, at eight on the following morning, they were laid before the First lord, whilst engaged at his toilet.

"When did these despatches arrive?" asked his lordship of the blue bearer of the red box.

"Last night, my lord."

"Last night! At what hour?"

"Between eleven and twelve o'clock, my lord."

"Tell the secretary I desire to see him."

Expecting the summons, the secretary soon made his appearance.

"Pray, Mr. M——, why was I not made acquainted with the arrival of these despatches, the instant they came to hand?"

"Your lordship had retired to rest," was the brief response.

"Rest, sir," exclaimed the First lord,—and the first lord that ever attempted to master this mighty personage—possibly by this delay I may be deprived of months of rest. To think," added his lordship, in an angry tone,—"to think, too, at such a critical time, so many hours should be lost!"

And, without waiting to complete his toilet, or to confuse his faculties by consulting the board, the First lord proceeded to perform the unprecedented task\* of committing to paper "orders," directing the Channel chief to reinforce the squadron blockading Ferrol;—that, thus strengthened, the commander of that squadron was to proceed, with all possible despatch, and to cruise between certain latitudes and certain longitudes, with a view of intercepting the combined squadrons of France and Spain.

By nine o'clock,—an hour after the First lord had seen Captain Bettes—th, who had been already summoned to his presence, and had made himself fully acquainted with the contents of Nelson's despatches, two Admiralty messengers, bearing instructions to the commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet, were on their respective roads to Portsmouth and Plymouth;† for his lordship's previously acquired nautical knowledge had recalled to his recollection, that in maritime matters, a "*spare*" or supernumerary messenger was always in ready reserve. The "*going* or *parting*" of a "messenger" (paradoxical as the assertion may seem) too often retarding the progress in pursuit.

On the 11th of the same month, four days succeeding to that on which the *Curieux* arrived at Plymouth, the Honourable Admiral William Cornwallis cruising off Ushant received those "instructions," which had first manifested the First lord's aptitude for office. And yet in those days neither steam-boats nor rail-roads were known, much less brought into operation to expedite despatch. But of what avail is rapidity of motion, if not preceded by rapidity of thought?

\* This is fact.

† The author had this fact from one of the profession.



## CHAPTER XI.

"O'erspreading mists the extinguished sun-beams drown,  
And hang their deep hydropick bellies down.

BLACKMORE.

IN conformity with instructions already received, Cornwallis had extended his line of look-out beyond the precincts usually prescribed to the Chief of the Channel fleet. No longer had he to confine his weary watch to the drear and abhorred localities of Ushant. His fleet had to traverse a wider space, and to search the seas from Brest to Finisterre, and Finisterre to Brest.

By this increase of range, was increased the chance of intercepting the fugitive fleets on their homeward *route*; for, should Villeneuve out-pace his intrepid pursuer, or elude the vigilance of Calder, already despatched to stop him to the southward, the probability was, that in proceeding northward, to form (as was his supposed purpose) a junction with Ganteaume's formidable force, then ready for sea in the port of Brest, Cornwallis would be enabled to cut him off before the latter could be apprised of his approach, or proceed to his succour.

And now was vigilance put to its utmost stretch. "No sooner did the "drowsy east" give indication of the dawn, and afford light sufficient to enable the eye to discern colours, than the mast-heads and other extremities of the Admiral's spars were streaming with bunting of every hue and form—flags, pendants, cornets, and symbols of every shape, employed in the "numerical and compass codes," were seen to wave in the wind.

In both columns, huge fabrics were to be discerned breaking, with the break of day, the close and compact "order of sailing" of the night—ships of the line shaping separate courses, and crowding canvass in different directions, as each proceeded to take up the desired distance assigned by compass signal. Here might be seen the taunt and symmetrical Mars, close-hauled, and *crowded to the truck*, leaving the fleet astern, and stand-

ing to the north, to occupy the prominent post of "look-out ahead." There the long and low Plantagenet, setting to' gallant studdin' sails, sparking away with a flowing-sheet, and lasking to the N. E. to place herself on the lee-bow of the body of the fleet. Now the eye caught the majestic and swift-footed Foudroyant bowling before the breeze, and steering to the E. S. E. to take up the lee-quarter look-out. Then the wind-wooling Bellona, with yards braced sharply up, and bowlines well boused out, hugging the breeze, to watch in its due direction at W. N. W. And now the Courageux, crank and yielding to the blast, stretching away to the S. W. to gain her appointed post on the weather-quarter of the column she had left.

By this system of sailing, and spreading look-out vessels, wide and far, a visual sweep encompassing a command of forty and sometimes fifty miles was obtained for the British Chief.

But the "spread-eagle search," as it was termed by the wags of the fleet, was now destined to be contracted. A fortnight's continuation of the clearest atmosphere of the brightest sky, of the bluest sea, of the finest breeze, and of the "smoothest water," that ever combined to give elasticity to life and limb, had been already succeeded by the densest fog that ever mystified the mind of man.

Contrast the former with the present position of the fleet. Imagine twelve thousand spirits, all animated with one hope (that of intercepting the flying foe,) all flushed with joyous anticipations of triumph, and then turn to the same number of depressed and saddened souls drooping under the conviction that the impenetrable veil which hid from view every object beyond the reach of touch, contributed to facilitate the enemy's escape.

Conceive, too, in this dense and dismal atmosphere, two-and-twenty huge vessels of war wandering the waters, each groping her weary way, and each, whilst under apprehension of parting or separating from the body of the fleet, in constant dread of coming in collision with another ship.

Talk of the dark mists and dense vapours which pervade the metropolis in the month of November—of city scribes inditing by light of lamp—of bankers' clerks

cashing checks by glare of gas—of link boys, torch in hand, leading state carriages and stage coaches—of wagons taking the wall and walkers taking the ditch, and of the “light-fingered fraternity” lightening travelling vehicles of their bag and baggage; these, these are trifles light as air compared with the casualties incidental to fog afloat.

The ships of the Channel were now on the noon of the fourth day still wandering in a wilderness of mist. Not, for a momentary lapse, did as much as the loom of hull, sail, or spar, break upon the sight: all were immersed in one interminable cloud, dense, and white as steam poured off from the valve of some gigantic engine. Sound alone was the medium by which the Channel chief sought to lead, or in any way conduct the movements of his blind-folded fleet. But, alas! in the general turmoil which assailed the ear,—such as metallic clatter on one tack, and rattle of sheepskin on the other, (for, with the exception of the Nonsuch, as will presently appear, each ship *affected* to indicate her supposed position in the “order of sailing,” by ring of bell, or beat of drum,)—the Admiral’s signal-guns were often unheard; whilst, perhaps, during a partial or momentary cessation of clamour, stray sounds, proceeding from reverberating thumps of some heavy-handed cocoa-pounding gang in the galley of a neighbouring vessel, were officially reported as veritable “reports” of powder.

Turn we now to the Nonsuch, every part of which was penetrated by the remorseless fog.

Her lower and topmast shrouds were tautened to a barlike and equable tension, to attain which would have set defiance to the ordinary process of purchase. Saturated in every pore, and contracted in every cloth, her shrunk sails stood like boards, presenting little convexity of form, whilst from neglecting the approved practice of “settling,” or slacking their respective halliards, the top-sail yards were drooping their extremities, and “bowing” and arching from their centres, as if ready to snap and sever in their slings. The guns and shot, in the racks and combings, the water-ways, hammock-cloths, boats on the booms, (for, since Darcy’s dip, the latter had been *kept uncovered*.) and every article of “furniture,” muni-

tion, or "fitting" of the ship, which had originally wore a sable hue, had now assumed a bluish tint.

On the water-sodden deck, which, to render it less slippery to the foot, was slightly strewed with sand, lay coiled, and "feaked," and "bighted" along, the blanched braces, and others of the running and dripping ropes. Whilst at the extremity of the weather-waist netting, stood the officer of the watch, muffled in thick attire, facing the feeding fog, and turning a deaf ear to the tiring and monotonous patter produced by the incessant drops falling from the canvass and cordage overhead.

In silent gloom, pacing the lee-side of the quarter-deck, were to be discerned young Darcy, and three other bare-footed striplings, (for the young gentlemen of the watch had doffed their shoes and stockings,) edging up to windward, and encroaching on the weather-walk as each sought to dodge and avoid the watery bequests of the set mizen stay-sail; whilst at the bowsprit end, at each cat-head, each quarter, and other positions assigned to the watch of the ear and eye, cowered in their several seats, seamen glistening with the silvery particles of vapour which clung to their woollen clothing.

Such was the aspect which the upper deck of the *Non-such* presented, when the first lieutenant, accompanied by the chaplain, approached the officer of the watch in the position already described.

"Well, Toms," said Leatherlungs, despondingly, "any chance of a clear?"

"Not the least!" replied his messmate, with a shake of the head, which flung in the face of the parson, the water which lodged on the broad rim of his leathern hat.

"Holloa, Toms!" ejaculated Lawrence, "you seem to be very profuse of your fresh water."

"To be sure; always share with a good fellow the good things that are going."

"How is it," asked Leatherlungs, "that our bell has been so long silent? I heard it not once during the night."

"That question," returned the officer of the watch, "the skipper can best answer."

"Ah, I see," rejoined Leatherlungs sarcastically, "*some* of us have very sensitive ears."

"Whether sensitive ears or sensible brains has induced the suspension of the practice, it is not for me to determine; but this I must say," continued Lawrence, unusually serious, "and since the commencement of the fog I have turned a thought or two upon this subject, that the system of every ship ringing her bell, or beating her drum, at the will and pleasure of the officer of the watch, strikes me to be the sure way to defeat the desired end; for recollect, Master 'Toms, that whilst knocking-up your own thunder, you only the more effectually shut out your neighbour's noise."

"Come, parson, that 's very true. I never thought of that before," returned the officer of the watch.

"My dear 'Toms," rejoined the chaplain pointedly, "were people sometimes to think a little for themselves, instead of perpetrating the practical blunders of official greybeards, stupidity would not so often usurp the place of thought."

During this short colloquy, Leatherlungs remained mute, leaning his back against the hammock rails, with his eyes fixed upon his feet. At length he inquired—

"When was the last bell heard?"

"Last night, and somewhere on the weather beam."

"What, 'Toms, do you mean to say, that no other sound has been since heard?"

"None, whatever."

"None? Then take my word for it," said Leatherlungs, waxing emphatic, "we have parted the fleet; it must be so."

"Nothing more likely; and if so, the skipper's alone to blame. He would heave-to in the middle watch. At four bells he sent for Johnny: desired him to haul the forecail up, and to back the main-yard; saying that he was satisfied in his own mind, that the admiral must have made the signal for the fleet to lie by."

"And how long were we hove-to?" asked Leatherlungs.

"Two hours."

"Two hours! two hours hove-to, upon the mere strength of idle imagination! It's too bad!" ejaculated the first lieutenant, stamping his foot upon the wet deck. "The next thing we shall hear of is, that the admiral has tumbled across Villeneuve, defeated him, returned to Plymouth or Portsmouth with flying colours, each ship un-

ing a prize into port; and that, by return of post, the first lieutenant of every ship in the fleet had received his commander's commission. By the Immaculate Man, it's enough to set a man stark staring mad, to think that a poor devil, after fagging for years and years, is to lose his only chance of promotion by the d—d, perverse—"

"How's her head, quarter-master?" inquired Sir Montague, stepping from his cabin.

"Wes-nor-wes, sir," answered Weatherly, who was then just in the act of "touching up" the drowsy compass with a wooden wand, which the old mariner had that morning manufactured from the "expended" ramrod of a ship's musket.

"And where's the officer of the watch?" inquired the captain.

Stepping from his nook, at the end of the weather-waist netting, which concealed him from the captain's view, the officer of the watch now answered for himself.

"Have you heard aly bells, Mr. Toms?"

"None, sir."

"Nor drums?"

"Nothing of the sort, sir."

"It's very odd, very odd ildeed."

"Mr. Leatherlungs thinks with me, sir; and we have just been discussing the subject, that we are further from the fleet than we may imagine."

"Mr. Leatherluls," called Sir Montague, motioning the first lieutenant to approach.

Leatherlungs proceeded aft, with sullen step.

"What do you *think*, Mr. Leatherluls?"

"I know not *what* to think, sir."

"Thel, if you dolt, *I* do; for I'm satisfied il my owl mild, that some of these geltlemel," pointing to Toms, "have, in some of their watches, lost the admiral's guls."

And without awaiting any response, save that which might have been gathered from the significant glances interchanged between the two lieutenants, Sir Montague, directing the officer of the watch to set the courses jib and driver, retired to his cabin.

The sails were speedily set, and soon gave evidence of the peculiarly contracting power of fog. The foresail looked like a reefed sail, and the mainsail, as Leatherlungs *observed*, appeared as if it belonged to a smaller vessel.

The bowlines boused up, and the weather braces set taut, the two lieutenants returned to their stand on the gangway.

"I say, Leatherlungs," said Toms, jocularly, "who now looks most like a lost gull? 'Tis plain he perceives his error, and is now anxious to pull up for lost ground."

"Lost ground, indeed!" murmured the first lieutenant.

## CHAPTER XII.

"I'll startle you worse than the racing bell."

HARRY VIII.

AFTER having wrapt his person in a drab-coloured water-proof surtout, buttoned up to the throat, and encased his thick neck in several folds of a large white worsted "comforter," the baronet reappeared upon deck.

Already had he taken his stand on the combings of the covered hatchway, before which stood, in the customary place in most ships, the "bearing binnacle" on the quarter-deck. In this position, with arms folded, and head bent downward, the senator remained for some minutes in a mood evidently intended to pass for one of deep meditation, when, at length, like a man suddenly making up his mind to act upon some happy inspiration, he called, in a loud and authoritative tone—

"Mr. Toms, ril' the bell, and keep it goil', as lol' as the courses are set."

"Messenger," cried the officer of the watch, "for'ard and ring the bell."

The under-sized urchin, who answered to the call and calling of messenger, was not long in reaching the belfry in the waist. In a few seconds, he sent forth a ding-dong—ding-dong—ding-dong, which pierced the tympanum of every ear in the ship.

"What d'ye think of that?" asked the first lieutenant of the parson, who had already "turned up his hands" to protect his ears. "Now, when the steed's stolon, we shut the stable door."

"*Capriccio, Signor*," was the brief reply.

"Mister Toms! Mister Toms!" cried the baronet, straining his lungs, to make himself audible to the officer

of the watch, "good heavens, sir, do, *do* learl to keep your ears open. No wolder the admiral's guls are lost. Heave the log, and see what the ship goes."

The log was hove by the mate of the watch, and "six and two" was the ship's reported speed.

"Six al two, eh! Six al two!" iterated the senator, entangled in his own thoughts, as the officer of the watch stood by his side, waiting his commands. "Now," (and "now" had a pause.) "Oh! yes. Now, Mr. Toms, you may pipe the people dowl to diller agail."

And then turning suddenly to the "orderly," pacing his post at the cabin-door, he exclaimed, "Seltry! seltry! tell my servalt to bril' me my scelted sluff."

The sentry, though an old soldier, was not altogether "up to snuff." He was a new hand in the ship, and had not long, with others, been despatched from the Plymouth division to complete the complements of the different "parties" serving in the fleet. Sir Montague had, therefore, to repeat his commands.

Advancing a few paces, halting in front of his superior, and standing stiff as a ramrod, his arms straightened down his side, and his hands clinging to his thighs, as close as if the limbs had been glued together, the soldier, who laboured under an impediment of speech, stammered forth,

"Plea—plea—plea—ple—ase, sir, what d— d— d— did you plea—plea—ple—ase to say, sir?"

"My scelted sluff, sir! Are you deaf?"

"N— n— no-o, sir."

"Thel, what the devil do you stald there for, stammeril', like a stuck pig?"

"D—d—did n't un—der—der—der—stand ye, sir."

"Mr. Toms, seld for the sergealt of mariles, and desire him to relieve this mal, as sool as the people have diled. Pretty pass, ildeed, to place a fellow at *my* door, who cal leither compreheld his owl lalguage, or deliver itelligibly a silgle word. Quarter-master, dowl off the gul, and tell my servalt to seld me up some fresh sluff out of the callister il the starboard quarter-gallery."

Dismounting the gun, on which he stood conning the ship, Weatherly proceeded on his mission, muttering, as he reached the half deck—



"Damme, there's a pair on 'em; and yet, too, bad as the soger is, give 'im his time, and he *will* come at som'at like the sound o' sense. But as for the tother, never—never in all my born days, did ever *I* hear mortal man make such a precious mess o' his mother's tongue."

Hardly and Weatherly delivered his message, and returned on deck, ere an indistinct hail, proceeding from the look-out man at the bowsprit end, attracted the attention of the gang-way group.

"What does he say? Curse that deaf'ning bell! there's no hearing a word," petulantly exclaimed the officer of the watch.

But inquiry was not to be forwarded by oburgation. Toms might as well have whistled to the wind as remain stationary denouncing the clamour of the bell. This Leatherlungs soon saw.

Forward he flew with the rapidity of thought, when throwing his eagle-eye over the breast-hammocks on the lee-side of the forecastle, a towering mass bursting through the fog broke upon his sight.

"Down wi' the helm. *Down wi' th' helm.* 'Bout ship—'bout ship, Toms," thundered forth the first lieutenant, drowning the shriller sounds of the bell with his deep stentorian tones.

"Hands about ship!" echoed the officer of the watch, pointing his trumpet downward in the waist.

"Lo, sir, lo,—up wi' the helm—*up* wi' the helm," roared the baronet, in a peremptory tone. "Do l't you lo, Mr. Toms, that *we* are on the larboard\* tack?"

"Is she goil off?"† inquired the captain.

"The driver, sir," said Weatherly, "flogs her up abaft."

"Ease off the boom sheet," sung out the officer of the watch.

"The mizen-topsail," hinted the quarter-master, eyeing the sail overhead.

Sir Montague took the seaman's hint. "Youlg geltel-mel," he cried, "shiver the mizel taupsle—quick!"

The captain's mandate soon caused the sail to sympathize with the young gentlemen.

\* Larboard tack, according to the old sea saw. Ships when standing on the larboard tack are compelled to bear up or give way to those standing or crossing on the starboard tack.

† Receding from the wind.

Obedying her helm, and increasing her velocity at a rapid rate, the ship had already receded from the wind, when, before sufficient time was afforded to those on the quarter-deck to catch even a momentary glance of the large looming object, which had so startled the first lieutenant on the fore-castle, a sudden crash, proceeded from the snapping of the outer spars on the bowsprit, assailing the ears of those abaft, was instantaneously followed by a collision terrific in effect.

Staggering under the severity of the shock, and giving two or three short, quick, unnatural rolls, first to star-board and then to port, the stricken ship, again yielding to the pressure of her canvass, vibrated for several seconds as if every plank, beam, rider, timber, and floor-futtock pertaining to her frame had felt the concussion in its fullest force.

The bulky bowsprit, large in the girth as the forest oak, having broken short off in the night-heads, had already fallen, together with the sprit-sail yard, jib-boom, fore-top gallant mast, head of the fore-top mast, and all the heavy-hanging accompanying gear of shrouds, bob-stays, guys, martingales, and multitudinous running ropes under the lee-bow of the ship—presenting to the eye a lumbering mass of confused wreck.

The boats on the booms, despite of their several lashings and confining gear, leaped from their cleats and chocks, and shifted their positions on the skids; whilst the massive and heavy lower masts, starting in their steps, suddenly snapped several of the shrunk and water-tautened shrouds of the standing rigging. The main-top gallant mast, following the fate of the spars forward, hung over the side, suspended by its own rigging, and every now and again was seen with the lee-roll to dip lightly into the water alongside, as if acting, as Mr. Fuller poetically observed, "the part of weeping willow to the general wreck."

Every individual, standing or sitting in the ship, was thrown from his legs or displaced from his seat. The officer of the watch, trumpet in hand, was precipitated from the gangway into the waist, breaking his fall by breaking the back of the baronet's favourite goat; whilst Sir Montague, falling forward from his stand on the

combings of the hatchway, was pitched with his head right into the binnacle box.

To the ship's company, who were discussing in their berths below their cherished "three-water tippie," and who to a man had participated in the first lieutenant's conviction that the ship had parted from the fleet, the concussion, indeed, was most unexpected. Recovering from the shock, the people on the lower-deck made a simultaneous rush to reach the ladders. Those which crossed in the hatchways became choked, and the eagerness of all to ascend proved only the means of detaining them the longer below. The more light and nimble lads caught hold of the combings of the hatchways, and swinging themselves up by their arms, fell sprawling in the wet waist.

The ward-room idlers, who, with the exception of the chaplain, had not "shown" once on deck since the setting-in of the fog, were now seen, in wild dismay crouching aft under the poop. The plethoric Gorge, in his hurried exertion to get upon deck, threw the blood into his head, which fortunately finding a "safety-valve" in his nasal organ, prevented the probability of the "captain of the *corps*," becoming in reality the *corpse* of the captain. Dunanney looked the picture of despair: whilst the trembling and pallid purser sought in vain to procure from the stammering marine the slightest information touching the disaster.

"Have all aback!" cried the captain, as soon as he had been replaced upon his legs by the joint efforts of Weatherly and the mate of the watch.

"Impossible, sir, impossible!" exclaimed the first lieutenant: "if we do so, we shall lose the foremast. The bowsprit's gone, sir!"

"The bowsprit gol! Bless my soul! Is the figure-head hurt?"

The response made to this untimely interrogation is not to be recorded.

"Mr. Leatherluls, shorten sail—lower the topsails—do *do something* for heaven's sake."

"Man the fore and main clue-garnets-foretaupsle clewlin's," vociferated the first lieutenant, in accents which clearly indicated a sense of self-superiority in moments of emergency. "And folksel there, haul the fore-

sail up, and clue the fore tautsle down as fast as possible;" adding, in the same breath,—“Let go the main tack and bowline—up main sail. Mr. Darcy!”

“Sir!”

“For’ard, and tell Mr. Giles, the moment the foresail’s up, to bouse well taut both the fore tacks. And tell the boson to despatch a party instantly for the fore-runners. —Fly! Main-top, there!—overhaul the main-to’ gallant mast-rope down on deck directly.

“Away with the main clue-garnets, men:—up with ’em cheerly,” continued Leatherlungs. “Bravo! Parson. Look, men, look! Look at Mr. Lawrence, showing ye the way to work with a will. Haul up *that* lee fore-clue-garnet. What are they about wi’ the fore tautsle clewlin’s!—*Do*, Mr. Fuller, brail up that infernal, flapping driver. Wish some o’ you gentlemen under the awning there, ’ould clap-on, and lend a hand here, ’stead of standing shivering and shaking there in the way o’ the work. You, sentry! keep your post clear, sir.” Then hailing the forecastle, “Mister Giles!—good Heaven, sir, haul taut the ford tack. D’ye want to *lose* the foremast! Where’s Mr. Toms!”

“He’s hurt, sir.”

“Master—Master—*do* go for’ard, an’ get the fore-runners up; meantime steady for’ard the mast wi’ the fore-tacks; and try, if you can, and save the fore-tautsle. Where’s the gunner!”

The gunner was close at hand, in the act of clearing the weather main sheet, which had got under the fore part of the main channels.

“Mr. Gordon,—none o’ the lower-deck ports up, I hope!”

“Only two on the slope, sir, in the gun-room.”

“*Slope*, sir! see them lowered directly—instantly barred in.”

“Mister Maul!”

“Here am I, sir.”

“Sound the well; and send your crew immediately on the folksel.”

The cry of “Sound the well!” sounded any thing but well in the purser’s ear.

“Gracious Heaven! Dunanney, do you hear that!”

“*It’s very awfu’* indeed,” returned the shivering quack.

The rapidity with which mandate, remark, caution, and reproof were alternated in the first lieutenant's mode of speech, may possibly impress the reader with no very incorrect conception of the chaotic state of his Majesty's ship. To use the *seldom-employed phrase* of writers of romance, "the scene was one which indeed baffled description."

The ill-timed interrogations,---the ludicrous cacophany,---the contradictory orders,---and the half-frantic confusion of the legislative framer of the Borough Bills,---together with the dictatorial commands and stunning shouts of the would-be captain---the hoarse bawlings of the slow bontswain---the shrill and confounding cries of "young gentlemen" startled into walking speaking-trumpets, by the coarse threats and rude gesticulations of higher authorities---the bustling flights of young Darcy and other nimble-footed lads running to and fro, to further orders already given---the boisterous interpositions of *busy mates*, "breaking-off" working hands, and dragging away willing men from this rope to clap them upon that---the heavy tramp of the "double-banked" gangs in the waist and quarter-deck, as each sought to "stamp-and-go," and "walk-away" with the water-swollen ropes, which were to compress and confine into folds the heavy canvass of the huge courses---and the thunder-like claps of the wet sails, wildly flapping in the wind,---may furnish a faint notion of the "*Nitty*," as Weatherly phrased it, which the Member for B--- "had brought upon the barkey."

Meanwhile the towering fabric with which the Nonsuch had come in collision, (for the lofty hull, the short lower masts, and triple tier of ports, gave evidence of a three-decker,) had already grappled the "Little Liner,"---clinging to her with tiger-like tenacity, as if determined to visit with signal severity the presumptuous act of striking a power so eminently superior to itself. In short, the stranger had instantly on receiving and gliding from the staggering blow which struck her in a lateral direction on the lee-bow, hooked with the outer arm of her sheet anchor, the after-shrouds of the Nonsuch's weather main-rigging. Entangled thus, the two vessels relatively assumed a head-and-stern position, and were now *seen rising and falling with the long undulating swell peculiar to the Bay of Biscay*,---grinding their bends to-

gether, and smashing their scupper-shoots, whilst every lee-roll of the larger vessel threatened to tear and carry away at one fell swoop the projecting channels of the smaller ship.

Nor was the excitement in both vessels likely to be allayed by the angry recrimination of their respective chiefs.

"What ship is that?" hailed the greater authority, in a pompous and peremptory tone.

"What ship is *that*?" echoed the senator, pitching the imperative a key higher, as he now stood upon the poop of the lower vessel.

"I *desire*, sir, that you instantly re-ply to my question," rejoined the first interrogator, throwing into his accented syllables the full force of the thirty-five Articles of War.

"This, thel, sir, is the *Lolsuch*, commalded by Sir Montague Mute."

"Then, Sir Montague Mute ought to be ashamed of himself," remonstrated the stranger, "for carrying such a press of sail in *such* a fog."

"Sir, I'm lot ashamed of myself," rebutted the baronet,—"but I'm ashamed of aly captail that cal tell alother captail he ought to be ashamed of himself.—Ald low, sir, that I've givel you the lame of *my* ship, I, il returl, have to request the lame of yours."

"This is His *Majesty's* ship Royal Sovereign, Captain Sharp."

"Sharp words!" said Weatherly, nudging the elbow of the man at the weather-wheel; adding, in an under-tone, "never seed it otherways—marchan' sarvus, or King's sarvus, both alike. Yer skippers tarn to a badgerin' one another, 'stead of first lending a fist to clear their craft, and save their sticks."

At this juncture was seen, peering over the lee quarter-deck hammock netting, the broad herculean bust of a man dripping with wet. From the stiff and crawling action of his limbs, in climbing over the stowed hammocks, and effecting a footing in-board, it was evident that the man was suffering from some bodily hurt.

"My precious eyes!" ejaculated Weatherly, perceiving the man's dripping plight, as he lowered himself leisurely into the lee water-ways—"my eyes, if it is n't

Peasant Paul.—Why the grownin legger 'e been over-  
board?"

Power's conclusion had already caught Sir Montague's  
eye.

"Where," said he, "has that man come from?"

"From the hospital ship, sir."

"Are you sure?"

"Got a precious nip in the arm, sir," rejoined the ad-  
dressee; adding, in a very low, as he brought his dexter  
hand to rest on a neighbouring rigging, "sartin, too, I've  
started my steeple."

"Take that man down to the cockpit."

"I hear ye, Sir Montague," said Domanney, stepping  
from behind the poop-railing, and catching overhead  
the patient's eye; on the sympathy of the quack had not  
forsook him, even in his fears. "I hear ye, Sir Mon-  
tague. In attending the sick, you even anticipate me."

Power was led down the after-ladder, and conducted  
forward to the sick berth, by a couple of the afterguard,  
Domanney proceeding, at a slow pace, his limping patient  
along the lee side of the main-deck.

"Why Paul, you must have kept a precious bad look-  
out at the hospital-ship," observed the cripple's principal  
supporter, "to have brought us into this here thundering  
mess."

"Who are you, as dares to talk of a bad look-out? I do  
go your head, ye shaggy-backed beggar!—let go yer  
head," exclaimed Paul, leaving his principal prop heel-  
ing into the lee-scupper.

"Hullo!" What's an' that soundin' good?" inquired  
the doctor, turning round, and prepared for the inevitable  
reply.

"I'm no soundin', doctor," said the growler, "to take  
never no more of your doses to-day. I've swallowed  
enough already."

"My dose," said Domanney; "why, sir, you're not at  
my age!"

"No, by Joe, and I've swallowed as much red water,  
as I I was."

"Hold your tongue, you murther soundin'!"

"Tut, tut, tut! Why, look at me. Is n't it easy to  
see, as I've only just come out o' your medicine chest?"

To offer to comprehend the plaudits of Peasant

Paul, it may be necessary to state, that Dunanney's remedial dose for all complaints was "a pint of pure salt water."

Pleasant's point spared him the unpalatable "pint." The cripple was consigned to the care of Smith.

Meanwhile "slashing work," as young Darcy had termed it, was to be seen upon deck.

"Cut away those lower laniards," cried the master of the Sovereign, addressing a brawny broad-shouldered boatswain's mate, who was seen without the port, striding the muzzle of a main-deck gun, hewing and hacking, with a large sheet-anchor axe, every particle of hemp or wood which tended to retard the extrication of the two ships.

"Lo, sir, lo; I'll lot have *my* riggil cut away," interposed the Baronet, authoritatively.

His Majesty's rigging had been pretty well hewed already. Nor was Jack's axe inclined to *az* the senator's permission, as to what it should or should not sever.

At length by cutting the desired shroud, the two ships were separated; and, in a few seconds were lost to each other's view.

"Turn the hands up, clear wreck!" vociferated the first lieutenant.

And with this mandate, and pleasing occupation before them, we leave Mr. Leatherlungs, Muddle, Browne, and Maul to secure the tottering spars, and to form a "jury" for the lost bowsprit of his Majesty's ship.

## CHAPTER XIII.

"Now my sands are almost run;  
More a little, and then done:  
This, as my last boon, give me,  
(For such kindness must relieve me.)"

SHAKESPEARE.

THE jury bowsprit had been hardly rigged, and the other spars of the ship rendered sufficiently secure to carry into effect Sir Montague's decision of bearing up, and proceeding direct for Plymouth, ere the wind, veering



gradually round, eventually settled right in the teeth of the "Little Liner."

Nothing is so trying to the temper, or so likely to produce sullenness, ill-will, or depression of spirits in seafaring folk, as a contrary wind. Approving smiles and cheering words constantly accompany a "flowing-sheet," whilst lowering looks and asperity of tone are too frequently the only attendants of a baffling or "beating" breeze.

If, then, the annoying influence of a "hard-hearted wind," (as Mr. Muddle daily denounced the "North-Easter" with which the ship had to contend,) be felt by those in health, how much more distressing must it be to those suffering from bodily pain and languishing in the sick-bay? The irritability of invalid nerves then becomes exacerbated, and sickness at sea, (not sea-sickness,) sometimes partakes of hypochondriacism.

From a sharp attack of rheumatic fever, consequent upon his recent "dip," Pleasant Paul had become any thing but a pleasant patient. Since the collision which took both the bowsprit and Potter overboard, Paul had been ten days bed-ridden in the sick-bay. His malady had somewhat reduced his herculean frame. His spirits were much depressed; and his peevish plaints and natural irritability of temper, had for several days rendered him an object of annoyance to all his messmates; while to the under grades of the medical department, he had already become a positive plague.

That he had occasional paroxysms of pain, none denied, —not even Dunaway; but neither Smith, nor Smith's assistant, Mr. "Billy Bolus," as the lolly boy was designated by the foremast-men, were under the slightest apprehension touching the recovery of their querulous patient.

Not so, Paul; he felt convinced his time was come. He knewed that he was a *game* man:—doomed for a certainty to be D. D.\* on the books of the bark. Moreover, he had seen enough in the middle watch of the past night to determine him to summon his tiernats to his hammock's side.

\* These letters are affixed to the man on the ship's books when he dies on-board. They signify "Discharged dead."

Paul's tiemate happened to be the galley, or rather King's-bench debater,\* who figured a few pages back, under the *sobriquet* of "Long-headed Bob."

Although sensible of Potter's impatience, Long was little disposed to hurry himself in complying with Paul's request. At length he entered the sick-bay. Drawing a match-tub, and placing it beside his tiemate's hammock, which was swinging between the two eighteen pounders in Dunarney's dominion, Long sat himself down.

"So, there you are at last," said Potter, peevishly. "I've seed the day when you'd 'a made yer number in half the time. But it only makes surer the sign. I'm sartain of it now. A feller a-goin' never can find a feller a-comin'."

"What's the matter now, Paul?" asked Long, good humouredly.

"What's the matter! How can you ax? Have ye never no eyes? Can't ye see?"

"See, Paul? I sees yer better—an' any feller with half an eye can see the same. Ay, better within a week's grog† nor ye were this time yesterday afternoon—I'm blest if ye ain't."

"Ah, Bob, you can't deceive me," said Paul, softening his asperity of tone, "can't be worse, Bob. Outer-bound, Bob. Hove short, Bob—stay peak. Take the case, Bob—keep the combs, and write to Bet."

"Come, come, my cock—cheer up—cheer up. Bless yer heart, I was twenty times worse nor ever ye was. Why, I was twice heaved-down for the roomatis in Haslar Hospital—reg'larly keel-out, by Joe. Cheer up, bo—; once ye comes to get yer grog again, you'll mend like smoke an' oakum—thrive, ay, thrive like a sucking babe."

"Ah, Bob, it's a pity I didn't haul my wind, when I was a sucking babe. 'Twou'd 'ave saved me a world o' tortur'. No, no, Bob, I'm mortally convinced my fate's fixed. I sees it, Bob; I feels it, Bob. I reads it in every face as hasn't the tongue to tell it, Bob. Moreover, Mr. Smith's phiz, this morn, Bob, was as long as the main-to'-bowlin'. Mr. Smith's a good man—a kind man, Bob:"

\* A name given by men-of-war's men, to those who discuss passing events in the vicinity of the galley.

† The grog of the sick is stopped in ships of war.

he is a feller as can feel for a feller, Bob; but as for the tother, he's no more heart, no, nor a hangman. He an' that pester-an'-mortar-poundin' beggar, Billy Bolus, ought to set up shop together. They're only fit for to torture man. No more, Bob. Well, well! Poor Bet!"

Here Paul muttered something to himself, in which Long could collect only the words "lose her lot like the tother three."

Again his tiemate sought to console him, but it was of no avail; and again in disjointed sentences, Paul poured forth his plaints.

"Can't—can't work agen' wind an' tide. Body won't bear it. The bago's bad enough in the back; but when the roomatis—" (here he gave a heavy groan,)—"that thund'ring fog's done it all; and then to say, a fellow kept a bad look-out—a more infernaller lie never felt from the mouth o' man. Oh, Bob! it's a terrible thing when it once comes to take hold o' yer witals. When once the roomatis comes to start your but-ends, take ye in the transoms, and shake yer floor-futtocks, why, then, Bob, there's never, never nothin' as can keep an unfortunat' feller afloat—nothin'. Ah, Bob! you'll soon have to heave the gratin' o'er the standin'-port o' the fore-sheet."\*

"My eyes, Paul!" ejaculated Long, perceiving Potter's depressed state, "do, do be more of a man."

"I *am*, Bob, more nor a man; for I've done *more* nor a man ought."

At this moment was heard the boatswain's hoarse bawl of—

"Hands reef taupsles!"

To use his own words, Long had to "spring his luff, bolt from the bay, and pull foot for the fore-rigging." In short, Paul's tiemate had to proceed aloft, and tie his complement of paints on the starboard side of the fore-topsail yard.

It was blowing fresh. The "barkey," as the boatswain phrased it, "was driving piles, pitching bows under, shipping green seas, and cooling the corns of all who footed the folksel."

The operation of reefing occupied a tardy interval—a period unprecedented in days of yore. The topsails were

\* A nautical phrase synonymous with burying the dead at sea.

difficult to spill; the stiff and stubborn canvass bagged to leeward with the blast; and the sea-going sirens in the waist, whose bright eyes were turned aloft, momentarily expected the exertions of the *earing-men* would end in a "drop."

The required reef had been taken in, the yards trimmed, and the watch called. Paul had already raised himself erect in his hammock, preserving his perpendicularity by a light laniard, which was attached overhead to the bolt in the beam, and which served as a sort of "man-rope," to raise, lower, or change the position of the patient in his "sack." Paul had anxiously awaited his tiemate's return. But of the bay and the bago Bob was heartily sick, and wisely preferred caulking\* below to canting above.

"No, no," said Long, throwing himself on the mess chest in his berth below, "no, no, I wants no move o' the bago in the back. I've had enough of Mr. Pleasant's prate. It's a waste o' words to try an' consolidate a chap as seems detarmined, whether or no, Tom Collins, to give up the ghost afore his reg'lar time."

Paul was manifestly labouring under mental excitement. His sunken and care-worn visage betokened a troubled mind. It was obvious he was anxious to unburden himself of some weight of wo. Twice had he placed his head upon his pillow, and twice, by the aid of his man-rope, had he raised himself erect in his hammock.

"Ah!" he sighed, evidently mortified at the non-return of his tie-mate, "it's just the way o' the world. No sooner nor I tells him to take the case, and keep the combs, nor the beggar turns his back on a body."

Paul had here libelled his tie-mate. Bob cared little for the combs; and the "*comblings*" of the fore-hatchway could attest, that Paul had equally often turned his *back* to Bob. The fact is, it would have been contrary to compact, and inconsistent with the vocation of a tie-mate, to fool away his time in *facing* his friend. As bondsmen, both were bound to *back* the other. And both were bound by mutual *ties*, which, in those days, it would have been sacrilege to *sever*.

\* Caulking—napping on the deck.

Alas! what circumstances are linked with the once favourite, but long lost phrase of

"Tie for tie, and d - n all favours!"

"It's too bad!" exclaimed Paul, throwing a furtive glance at the lobbolly-bey, who was occupied in the pleasant task of tearing tow, preparatory to spreading a blister dressing for a less troublesome patient. "Never mind, I'll send for a better man."

Paul nodded to Bodus. But the lobbolly-bey knew his man. Although seen, Piccaunt's signals were purposefully left unanswered.

"You, Billy! You, Bodus! D'ye hear, ye lubberly grass grubbin' buggar, d'ye hear?" D'ye want an unfortunate fellow to waste the little wind as is left in his body in singin' out for the likes o' you, ye tow-tearin' blubber-spreadin' gall-rollin' platter-faced pycrow?"

Bodus had been too well accustomed to these complimentary calls to respond to his intangible patient; he therefore proceeded in his task. But with Paul contempt was always a punishable offence. His shoes were stowed in the head end of his hammock. On or off, his footstools, as he termed them, were ever active agents in enforcing obedience to his will. Paul was a good shot. His propelled pumps had already brought Mr. Bodus to his bearings.

"What d'ye mean by that, ye unmanly ruffian?" cried the stricken brazier of tow, applying his hand to his dexter eye. "What d'ye mean by a thym? yer shoes arter that sort o' fashion, ye impatient pest? I werry believe you've knocked the bit out o' my 'ead. Now, too, ye blood-thirsty brute! see how you've set my mouth a-bleedin'. D'ye call that the hactum o' a sick man?"

"And d'ye call it the action or deed o' a lobbolly-bey," retorted Paul, "to turn a dead ear to a dying man?"

"Frying! that's a good one. No such luck."

Paul was about to follow up his fire; a miscellaneous missile was already in his hand. "Isuah up, and come here, directly," said he, in a peremptory tone, taking deliberate aim at the head of the bleeding Bodus with the tin pot which had contained his light allowances of barley-water. "Come, stir your stumps! beat a fiat, afore I send this thym at yer precious pate."

The attendant, surrounding, approached his pleasant patient.

"Come nearer—nearer yet. I wants to whisper a word in yer ear.

The loblolly-boy obeyed.

"Go quietly aft," proceeded Potter, "an' whisper the parson as I now does to you, an' just say,—'Please, sir, there's a sick man as wants to see you for'ard in the bay.'"

"The parson!" exclaimed Bolus, with a stare of surprise.

"Hold yer gab, ye pratin' thief. Do as ye'r bid, and no lip. Come, make sail, be off; scud. No talk."

"Well, wait, can't ye, till I wipes my mouth. Ye would'n't have me face a gemman in this ere horrible figur."

And so saying Mr. Bolus, after cooling and cleaning his blood-begrimed mouth with the tail of a wet swab, proceeded aft on his mission.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

"For I would commune with you of such things  
That want no ear but yours."

### MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

BOLUS, who had been for some time beating and boxing about the "lower regions" in search of the chaplain, 'convinced,' so he phrased it, 'that the larkin' gemman *must* be amusing himself in one or the tother of the midshipmen's messes,' had found himself at fault, and had already traced Mr. Lawrence to a loftier, though less social, locality. The parson, in fact, had been for some time seated at the weather-side of the ward-room table, sipping his wine, and making himself as comfortable as he possibly could under the combined annoyances of a pile-driving head sea, a contrary triple-reefed-topsail breeze, and a set of silent and sullen companions.

The personal appearance of the pale, meagre, slovenly, slop-attired pesule-and-mortar-man, with his half-closed eye and swollen mouth, suggested to the sentinel at the ward-room door the propriety of opposing the loblolly-boy's right of admission

"Who d'ye want? can't you speak?" interrogated the sentinel, pacing his post. "D' you want the doctor?"

"No, I does n't want *he*," responded the roller of pills.

"Who then?"

"The parson."

Thinking that Bolus was the harbinger of bad tidings, for the loblolly-boy in quest of the parson carries with it the strong presumption that somebody on board is about "to lose the number of his mess," the marine, without further parley, admitted the miserable messenger of wo.

Entering the ward-room with an awkward air of inquisitive search, the upper lid of his 'weather eye' sloping downward, like a lower-deck port of a rainy day, the loblolly-boy approached the lower end of the officers' table.

"D' ye want me?" said Dunanney, inquiringly.

"No, sir."

"Muster Smith, then, does n't dine *here* to-day."

"I does n't want *he*, neither, sir," rejoined the teaser of tow, who now, on perceiving the parson's position, crept aft behind the backs of the officers, seated on the weather side of the table,—touched the chaplain on the shoulder, whispered a few words into his ear, and quickly withdrew.

"What's the matter, Muster Lawrence?" inquired Dunanney, observing the chaplain suddenly rise from his chair: "I'm certain that none of my patients are in need of spiritual comfort."

"Possibly not," returned Lawrence; "but I always make it a point to comply promptly with the summons of the sick."

At the suggestion of Dunanney, the parson resumed his seat, till a servant was despatched to bring Mr. Bolus back to the ward-room.

"What's the matter with your eye, sir?" asked Dunanney, on the re-entry of the disfigured pill-man.

"Potter, sir," muttered the miserable Bolus.

"And your mooth too?"

"Potter, sir."

"And who sent ye, sir, for Mr. Lawrence?"

"Potter, sir."

"Potter! Potter! What's the fellow pottering about?"

"*He says he 's dying*, sir."

"Who?"

"Potter, sir."

"The scoondrel! *Dying* indeed!"

"Perhaps, doctor," interrupted the parson, "he's only *dying* to see me."

"No, no, Muster Lawrence, I can't sooffer ye to be tormented by such a soorly, fool-moothed, mutinous pest."

"Deuced good man," exclaimed Leatherlungs, accompanying his blunt remark with a corresponding thump upon the table.

"Capital leadsman," observed the master, following in his leader's wake.

"Keeps his boat in excellent order. He may growl," said the junior lieutenant; "but growl-an'-go was always a good dog."

The chaplain had already entered the sick asylum. The loblolly-boy led him to the hammock of the "dying man," at the side of which had been already dropped a canvass screen. Placing a stool for the reverend gentleman, Bolus retired.

"I axes yer pardon, sir," said Paul, "for dragging ye so far for'ard in such a head-sea; I does indeed, Mr. Lawrence; but ye may depend on it, sir, there's never another parson in the sarvus as I send for 'sides yerself," he added, offering to his pastor an awkward tender of his heated hand.

"Rather warm," said Lawrence, replacing the hand of the patient gently in his hammock. "Still," added the chaplain, "there appears to be little of fever hanging about you."

"Ah, sir, a heavier thing nor fever's a-hangin' *here!*" sighed Paul, raising his huge, brown, weather-beaten hand to his broad brow.

"Oh! come," said Lawrence, cheeringly, "to-morrow I hope we shall find you another man."

"Another man indeed," iterated Paul, despondingly. "In course, Mr. Lawrence, ye knows what they calls a reef-pint as hangs below the yard when the sail's furled? Ye knows what I means, does n't ye, sir?"

The chaplain nodded assent.



"Well, then, that's the *man*,\* sir, as you'll find *me* to-morrow."

"Nonsense, nonsense, man. You mus'n't indulge this depression of spirits."

"I does n't, sir; but I well knows I could meet my fate the firmer, could I only lighten a little o' this terrible load aloft."

"Well, unburden your mind to me," said Lawrence, consolingly. "Possibly we may manage to *lighten* a little of your load."

The look which followed these few consolatory words would have puzzled even the pencil of the inimitable George Cruikshank. For several seconds, the starting eyes of the penitent seemed to search the very soul of his spiritual pastor; when, at length, letting loose the sluice-gates of his full feeling, he emphatically exclaimed,—

"Bless yer comfort-talkin' tongue! I well know'd ye was never the man to refuse a helpin' hand to a feller-cretur in trouble—I was sartin ye was n't. Ah, Mr. Lawrence," he added, with increased emphasis, "there is n't a man or boy aboard, no, not even a *sager* in the ship, as would n't go—go *by*——"

"No expletives, Potter," exclaimed Lawrence, with uplifted hand, cutting short the fervid deliverance of Paul's adjuration. "I expect you will now," added the chaplain, "reveal to me, without any reserve, every circumstance connected with your troubles. Conceal nothing. Consider me your best friend."

For a few minutes, Potter, who had already raised himself erect in his hammock, seemed absorbed in thought. His head hung downwards; whilst his fiddling fingers were in active, though apparently unconscious, operation, plucking small particles of wool from his upper blanket. At length, turning to Lawrence, he exclaimed,—

"Well, sir, if I must reveal all, without any presarve. I thinks I can't do better than begin with the lightest first."

"Please yourself, Potter; but pray proceed."

\* When the topsails are furled, and the reef-points are not tucked in, but dangle carelessly beneath the yards, they are technically termed "*Dead men*."

"Well, then, first an' foremost, sir," proceeded Paul, "I wishes to ax ye, sir, if ye thinks as the heavin' a contrairry cat overboard *much* of a crime?"

"Cruelty to animals," responded the parson, endeavouring to suppress a smile, "I have ever deprecated. Indeed, I look upon it as a very hard-hearted and heinous offence."

"There it is, Mr. Lawrence. No one knows the torture it brings to my mind at night. I sometimes thinks I feel the cretur's claws clingin' to my hot head, an' every now an' again as if she was scrapin' and scratchin' a hole in my burnin' brain."

"But pray, Potter," asked Lawrence, "what reason can you possibly assign for the commission of so cruel an act?"

"Well, I'll tell ye, sir.—I b'longs to the Phee-aton frigate at the time. She was a fancy ship, Mr. Lawrence—a reg'lar flyer. She'd think nothin' o' knockin' ye off eleven on a bowlin'. She was a man-o'-war, Mr. Lawrence. A man *was* a man in she. Every one know'd his work: and them as *worked* us know'd the business of all aboard——"

"But the cat's business?" interrupted Lawrence.

"I'm coming to that, sir. Well, sir," continued Paul, "we was comin' from foreign at the time. Was ye ever at the Cape, Mr. Lawrence?"

"No, never."

"Well, sir, we was comin' from *there* at the time; just as we closes the chops o' the Channel, we was caught with just such another badgerin' breeze as this here thundrin' easterly win. We was six-upon-four at the time, and terribly short o' water. The people below 'gins to growl, and look black one on the tother, an' the watch on deck hauls only half their strength, and works with a heavy heart. For twelve days an' thirteen nights, the wind keeps stiff and steady in the same parvarse, provokin' pint. In course, every one seed as a spell had got hold o' the ship. Some sot it down to the score o' this, others to the score o' that.

"At last, sir, a young feller o' the name o' Forbes determines the thing in another way. Fred was second captain o' the folksel in the starboard watch; a finer *young feller* ye never seed. He stood six feet two in his

weakest part. He made no mention of you, Mr. Lawrence. In course, he had not the means, or means, or wisdom way of you, as; but he was a ship as feared nothing in life, and the word of God was the will of all blessed.

"Well, sir, on the twelfth night, just as they were on the first watch, up comes God on the deck. 'Still,' said God, looking to midnight, and looking his morning without his chest, 'still this heavenly heaven?' Ah!" says he, 'that thought' put you into the same one it all. You,' says he, shaking his hand, 'Carpenter's not a capitalist but a pirate; for you see, Mr. Lawrence, 'twas an enemy not me, put her out of a prize, a brig as was captured before we had found the tale of her. 'Come, Paul,' says God, 'first on me to beat him a fist; 'come down with me,' says he, 'I'll soon settle her head.' Well, in course, sir, 'twas not given the thing as much as the turn of a thought, but 'twas a the job I did not, down was down together, hand long in hand, to the heart of the house that. 'There was Carpenter's not the the ship's corporal hands as his light, killed in a round kile, and wound naked, in the very descent of spot as God said she was sure to be.

"Well sir, the moment God gave a grasp at her neck, she flung her eyes, spots first faster not back light'ning strikes her tail on end, and strikes out with her four limbs in the strongest way ever I used with brutal hands. Here-comes, sir, she soon bundles her into a bag, brings her on deck, claps a sheet in the sack, ties up the muzzles, and sends her on their heavy heavy flyin' over the sea out hand, from our father's to board of the ship. 'There, now, Mr. Lawrence, you have the whole of the truth, as far as concerns the cat,' concluded Paul, turning to the parson, who had already risen from his seat, with his face hidden in his handkerchief.

"Good-bye you, Mr. Lawrence, don't leave me, yet," exclaimed Parson, thinking the parson was about to depart. "My next trouble I'll tell you to tell."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, sir; you know I can't startin'."

"No, you don't. Well, good-bye," said Lawrence, rising from his seat.

"Well, sir, what I would now to know is, whether you

thinks it much of a sin when a man, leavin' the station, stops his lot."\*

"What do you mean? I understand you not," replied Lawrence, affecting ignorance of Potter's question.

"Why, when a man's obligated to splice another in another place."

"Surely, Potter, you don't mean to insinuate that you have committed bigamy?"

"Committed what, sir?"

"Why, I trust you have not married more than one wife."

"I am sorry to say, sir, I've been obligated to splice *four* in my time."

"Four!" exclaimed the parson in surprise.

"Yes, sir; they *would* have me, whether or no."

"Why, you must be a fancy man with the women."

"I s'pose I must, sir."

"But surely you do not mean to say that they are all living!"

"I dun know, sir; can't exactly say. In course, the one as *now* gets her lot, is well and hearty; but they tells me she in Barbadoes and the tother in Halifax are both sot up in business, and doin' well."

"Which did you marry first?"

"The creole, sir. She was as nice a craft as ever ye clapt eyes on, Mr. Lawrence. She was indeed, sir. She used to bum-boat the ship. She took a fancy to me, 'cause I used to hand her traps in and out of the boat, and listen to her coloured talk atwixt the guns on the main deck. It comed on very suddenly, sir. The thing was clinched in a crack. 'Take care of yourself, for sake of Sal,' says she, one evenin', as I sees her into the boat as takes her ashore. 'Take care, Poll,' says she, (for she always called me Poll,) givin' me a squeeze of the fist as told more nor she meant her tongue to tell. Well, sir, the next mornin' she brings me off from the shore a bran new beautiful length of black ribbon to tie my tie, shovin' into my fist at the same time as nice a case of combs as ever ran through the hair of man.

\* When a seaman apportions part of his pay to his wife or family, it is termed "lotting."

'Keep dat,' says she, 'for sake of Sul. Make you tuk o' Sul, when ever ye combis yer hair. Ah!' says she, heavin' a heavy sigh, 'I do nothin' but think of you, Poll, all the blessed night.' 'And,' says I, 'I does nothin' but think of you, Sul, all the blessed mornin'.' 'You say so, Poll?' Then both think o' t'other. 'So it seems, Sul,' says I. 'Well, s'pose, Poll, we think both all the same as one.' 'I've no objection, Sul,' says I, 'Though we make two o' the thing; so if you thinks as I does, we'll soon clinch the concern.' 'Nice man,' says she: 'such nice lub-locks,' says she, running her fingers through these here hanks o' hair. When a craft, Mr. Lawrence, comes to fiddle with a fellow's hair, there's nothin' else for it left, but to shove the ring on her finger."

The parson had great difficulty in repressing his tendency to laugh outright. But it was his business to look grave, and he accordingly mustered his features.

"But how came you to lose this first wife?"

"I did n't lose her, sir. She lost herself. When we leaves the station, 'stead of followin' the ship, she prefers to follow the rogues. So, in course, sir, I'd nothin' else for it left, but to knock off her bot. Does n't ye think she deserved it, sir?"

"Yes," returned Lawrence, "but that did not justify you in marryin another while she was living."

"Must bot to some one, you know, sir."

"This is against all law, divine and human, Potter."

"That's just what I was afeard of. I only wanted to have it from your own lips, sir. But you see, sir, the second *would* have me, as well as the first."

"Where did you pick her up?"

"At Hahira, sir. She, too, took a fancy to my tie, and had me abow I well know'd where I was. Fan was a cunninger craft nor Sul; she was as jealous as a she tiger. Moreover, sir, she was som't like Crappo's cat,—had a nasty way of using her claws. So, in course, when we were ordered home, I forgot to bot Fan."

"You should never had lotted to her at all," observed the parson.

"I wishes I'd never a seed her."

"Well, go on. I'm bound to hear you."

"Well, sir, we gets to the Cove of Cork, and there I takes up with a third. The Irish girls, you know, Mr.

Lawrence, have such terrible tongues—such coaxing winnin' ways with 'em."

"So I understand," said the clergyman.

"You may depend on it, sir, they'd weather on a knowin'er man nor me. Once they comes to bring their talk to bear on a body, there's no refusin' em: so, you see, sir, luggin' me along to the Holy Ground,\* Biddy soon gets the priest to do the job."

"Worse and worse," exclaimed the chaplain.

"Lord help me," was the ejaculation of the penitent.

"Ah! woman 's, sir, the ruin o' man."

"Then why did you take a fourth?"

"Could n't help it, sir. When once you get in the way o' the thing, you can't, can't help it; and *you'd* say so too, sir, if you once got a glimpse o' Bet."

"A glimpse of who?"

"She as I lots to now. She's the best o' the bunch; and that's the reason," he added pettishly, "that the poor thing must lose her turn, as well as the t'other three. But, if I only gets over this here beggarly bago, I'll never forsake *she*,—no, that I wont—never, Bet!"

"This emotion, Potter, does you credit," returned the parson; "but I wish it had been manifested for your first wife, who is now living, instead of your *last*, however amiable she may be."

"I see, Mr. Lawrence, you likes the Creoles—nice-built craft. None of your wall-sided wenches."

"Nonsense, Potter! we are met on serious business. I am surprised at your levity. I shall leave you," continued Lawrence, rising to retire, but all the time laughing in his sleeve.

"I axes your pardon; I does, indeed, Mr. Lawrence. I meant no manner of offence. I can't spare ye yet,—indeed I can't, sir; the worst is still to come."

"I'm sorry to hear it, Potter. I can't conceive anything more reprehensible than deception toward the sex. But if your conscience is still further burthened, I must insist on your adopting a more solemn demeanour. Jokes do not become a man in your situation."

"Ah, it's no joke, sir, I promise you," said Potter,

\* There are two patches of *Paradise* in the vicinity of Cove. One is called the "West Holy Ground," the other the "East Holy Ground."

mistaking the admonition of the chaplain; "and you would say so too, sir, if you only seed the same. The bell exactly struck three in the middle watch, when it first hung over my hammock."

"What?"

"The white skeleton hand, sir. It held the broken bit of the same stone. The more I shuts my eyes to shut it out, the more closer it seemed to come. Oh! it was a horrid, horrid sight, sir. The prospiration dropped from my forehead like the dripping of a wet swab."

"To what do you allude?"

"Do ye 'members, sir, the times as we drops down to St. Helen's to avoid the Court Martial at Spithead?"

"I do."

"You knows Mr. Leatherlungs *would* send a boat a-shore for holy-stones?"

"Yes, I remember the circumstance."

"I was coxswain of the yawl, sir. Mr. Leagur had charge of the boat. Young Mr. Darcy was with us, too; a nice-mannered young gentleman he is. We takes a parcel o' top-mauls with us, to smash the stones. 'Well,' says Mr. Leagur, speaking to the boat's crew, 'bear a hand, boys, and fill the boat, and I'll give ye a gallon o' rum when we gets back to the ship.' Well, 'Will's the word,' says Short—him as we calls Slashin' Sam—'follow me,' says Sam; 'I'll soon show ye the way to fill the boat.' Well, upon this we takes the top-mauls, an' all but the boat-keeper follows in the wake o' Sam; while Mr. Leagur an' young Mr. Darcy takes a couple o' ship's muskets, an' goes a-shootin' another way.

"Well, sir, after working a traverse inland a short half mile or so, we falls in with a churchyard clear of a livin' soul. 'Here we has 'em,' says Sam; 'here's a nest on 'em!' says he. 'If we does n't soon fill the boat now, then there's never no snakes in Virginny. Remember the gallon o' rum, my boes,' says Sam, flingin' himself, top-maul and all, on the top of a tombstone clear o' grass. 'Smash away, my sons,—here's holy-stones\* enough,' says Sam, 'for every ship in the sarvus.' An' with that we falls to

\* Doubtless the officers who served in H. M. S. D—n—k, some nine-and-twenty years since, may recall to their recollection an incident which, in many particulars, bore a strong affinity to the above narration.

a-breakin' the carved stones, an' carries away more nor a couple o' tons of broken bits, with all sot o' letters on 'em, large an' small, gilt an' black."

"Why, this was nothing less than sacrilege, Potter," observed the reverend gentleman.

"Ah! yes, sir, if it was n't, I would n't 'ave seed what I did in the middle watch."

"What did you see?"

"The most frightfullest thing as ever tortur'd the sight o' mortal man. The sound was hardly out o' the third bell, when a white bony shrivelled hand hangs over my hammock, clinchin' in its fist the feller piece of the broken bit; the same diential bit as I've so long been 'a tryin' to grind out on the torturin' words

### 'In Memory of'

But no; neither dry-rubbin' nor wet-stonin' can start a single letter. They seems to stick to the stones, as if de-tarmined to remind me of my wicked deed. And then, this here ghost of a hand facin' me, wi' the t'other bit as carried on it the full-starin' name o' the Christian soul it kivered. Ah! Ann Dobbs! Ann Dobbs!" sighed Potter, "I'll never, never forget yer frightful fist!"

"This unloading of your conscience cannot fail to be beneficial to you," said Lawrence. "You will sleep happier for it to-night; and, I think we shall not find you to-morrow, like a reef-point, dangling down from the top-sail yard. Good afternoon. Compose yourself."

"Heaven bless you, sir!" ejaculated the penitent Potter. "I feel myself another man already."

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## CHAPTER XV.

"Must I bite?

Yes, certainly; and out of doubt, and out  
Of question too, and ambiguities."

HENRY V.

AFTER contending for two and twenty days with a contrary wind, the Nonsuch was now at noon abreast of



the "Rain-head," a projecting point in the vicinity of Cawnand-bay.

With the exception of the atmospheric haze peculiar to an easterly wind, the day was beautifully bright. The surface of the glittering sea was gently ruffled, which, for leagues along the Cornish coast, was studded with tiny craft, extending their tanned sails to the brisk breeze.

Hardly had the Nonsuch "made her number" to the signal post on Maker Tower, ere a boat, pulling round Penlee Point, was seen to approach the ship.

"Who 's il that boat?" inquired the baronet.

"Mister Penn, the pilot, sir," responded Mr. Fuller, from the break of the poop.

"You seem, youlg gentlemal, to have his lame very pat. How do you low it 's him?"

"By his white coat, sir," rejoined the signal mid, in a confident tone.

"His white boat?"

"No, sir, his white coat."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Fuller's right enough," said Leatherlungs, eyeing with his glass the white-coated sifter in the white-painted cutter on the lee-bow of the ship. "That 's old *Welcome all*—that 's him—know him by his red mug."

"Wol lows him by his white coat, alother by his red mug. Pray, Mr. Muddle," said Sir Montague, addressing the master, who had also brought his "berge"\* to bear upon the closing boat. "Pray have *you* aly particular mark by which to low this mal?"

"Mark! yes, sir. Know him by his mooring mark."

"His *mooring* mark, Mr. Muddle?"

"Yes, sir; by his right hand. Whenever he holds up his right hand, it 's a sure signal to unbit the best bower. In moderate weather he always makes it a rule to run the two cables clean out 'thout coming to a check. Yes, sir, that 's him. Big as a butt. Bigger in the bilge than Captain Gorge. Swear to his paunch any where."

The "marks" and remarks of Mr. Muddle were little to the baronet's taste. The senator withdrew, and transported the presence to the poop.

"Luff, quarter-master, luff; and deaden her way through the water," cried the first lieutenant, again look-

\* Spy-glass.

ing at the boat with his glass. "Ease off the head sheets. Rope along ready for the boat? Mr. Darcy, side clear? Sideboys ready? Stern fast in the chains?"

"All ready, sir."

"Now, parson," continued Leatherlungs, turning to Lawrence, who was walking on the weather-side of the quarter-deck, "now we shall have all the news. Old Penn's a regular walking newspaper. Capital fellow after a long cruise. Gives ye the marrow of the matter in a minute. Not so much chattering there in the main-top. Boat nearly 'longside, Mr. Darcy?"

"She's just this very moment, sir, got hold of the rope."

"Smartest midshipman in the ship. Wish I had him in a good eighteen-gun brig."

"And that I was your first lieutenant," whispered the parson.

"Might have a worse."

The portly Palinurus now ascended the side, and made his bow to the king's parade.

"Welcome all! welcome all! Best bower unbitted? See you've got a jury-bowsprit: lost t'other in the *Brest* business? Who's your captain now? Just hit the time of tide, Mister Master. Run 'em both clean out, you know. No stoppage in the tier. Mind your weather helm, my man. Wind sure to head you as you open with the Fish-house. Beautiful weather! haven't had a drop o' rain for nearly a week."

In a similar strain of verbal rapidity, the white-coated functionary, wending his way aft, ascended the poop, without once turning to a single soul, or seeming to require one word of response to any of his queries or rambling remarks.

"Most obedient, sir," said he, saluting Sir Montague on the break of the poop. "Shan't bring up upon this tack. Must make another board or two, to fetch our berth. I see ye show your *mark*, sir. 'Twas a nice business, I'm told. Tells a better tale than the *other*. They call it here the Foggy fight. People are not pleased with it. Got out of it badly."

"Blown, by the Lord! already," said Leatherlungs, aside.

"That, the Royal Sovereign *has* arrived, has she?" said the baronet, interrogatively.

"No, *she* hasn't; but the Malta and Windsor Castle are both in the bay. The two lame ducks are up the harbour. Got terribly mauled. Nearly battered to pieces. Round with her now, sir, if you please."

The ship was hove about, the yards trimmed, and the colloquy on the poop resumed.

"I have to doubt, Mr. Pilot," said Sir Montague, addressing "old Welcomes-all" by an appellative which was very unwelcome to the old gentleman's ear, for Penn was not an ordinary pilot—he performed the part of Harbour-master to the Channel fleet, and therefore always sought to sink the lower title—"I have to doubt, Mr. Pilot," proceeded Sir Montague, in a more distant and dignified tone; "that the phrase of 'foggy-fight' has been purposely adopted to convey a libellous insinuation, but it should be borne in mind that it was a very natural result, and let wol that should create any surprise. People displeased, indeed! People should mind their own affairs, Mr. Pilot, and let meddle with matters of which they can do little."

"I don't think, Sir Montague, the folks ashore will agree with you *there*. A very different result was expected. Indeed, now nothing else is talked of but a court martial."

"Ah, I'll soon settle that wheel I go to towl," said the senator, in a self-important tone. "Wol story is always good 'till the other's told."

"'Pon my word, sir—No higher, my man; watch the flaws off the land—'Pon my word, sir, we've had so many different versions of the matter, that one's quite at a loss which to believe; but the fact is, Sir Montague," added Mr. Penn, with marked emphasis, "your *over cautious* people seldom give satisfaction. We shall haul the main-sail up in stays, sir."

The phrase "over cautious" appeared to give little satisfaction to the senator. Leatherlungs caught his eye. He saw his commander's mettle was up.

"When you wait, Mr. Pilot—"

"I'd rather you'd call me by my name, sir," interrupted Mr. Penn.

"I choose to call you Pilot, sir; and when you wait the ship hove it stays or sail shorted, you'll please to commu-

licate with the first lieutenant. Your observations, Mr. Pilot, are very uncalled for, and very unbecomingly of a man in your station."

And so saying, the baronet descended from the poop, and sullenly retired to his cabin.

The astonished Mr. Penn had already linked the arm of the first lieutenant, and drawing him aside said—

"Bless my soul, what's the matter with the captain? He seems a very touchy sort of a gentleman. The other captains always seem so well pleased when I give them any of the news that's going."

"Hit him d—d hard," rejoined Leatherlungs, with a significant shake of the head, "d—d hard: *felt* it, too. Yer '*over cautious* people' was a sharp shot; and as for your *foggy fight*, 'twas a regular flooder. Got the worst of it *there*. Too much metal for some of us. Couldn't stand the fire of a three-decker. Capital name—foggy fight—capital," added the lieutenant, chuckling to himself.

"Why, I thought you got crippled in the *other* business?"

"What business?" interrogated Leatherlungs.

"What business! Why, old Billy Blue's, to be sure. What, then, you haven't heard of the *Brest brush*?"

"The *Brest brush*!" said Leatherlungs, in a tone of surprise.

"Ay, cuts out your affair altogether. What have you done with Calder?"

"Calder! What of him?"

"What of *him*? 'Pon my word you seem a very strange set in this ship altogether. You may well call her the *Nonsuch*."

This sort of equivoque was interrupted by having again to tack the ship, when Lawrence, who now joined the pilot on the poop, elucidated Mr. Penn's *contre temps*, touching the "*Brest brush*" and the "*Foggy fight*." The first had a reference to a gallant affair of Admiral Cornwallis with Ganteaume, who came gasconading out of Brest Roads, and anchored his fleet under shelter of the strong batteries newly erected in Camaret Bay. Cornwallis attacked the French after weighing from this anchorage, and drove them back into Brest, under a tremendous fire of shot and shell from all the batteries.

extending along the coast from Camaret Bay to Point St. Mathews. The "Foggy fight" referred to Sir Robert Calder's recent rencontre\* with Villeneuve.

"'Twas touch and go with old Coachee,"† resumed Mr. Penn; "he got a crack on the chest with a bit of a broken shell."

A new light had now broken upon Leatherlungs. "By the Immaculate Man!" he exclaimed, emphatically, stamping the deck, "we are the most unfortunate fellows afloat. It's always the case. Sure to be out of every thing *good* that's going."

"Up with the foresail, if you please, sir. Stand by the best bower. Let go the anchor. Now, sir,—no check. Two cables clean out, and we'll moor her in no time."

And so saying, Mr. Penn's commands were complied with, and H. M. ship was soon seen

"Moored in Cawsand Bay."

## CHAPTER XVI.

\* Francis Feeble !

Here, sir.

What trade art thou, Feeble ?

A woman's tailor, sir.

Well said, good woman's tailor ! well said, courageous Feeble ! Thou wilt be as valiant as the wrathful dove, or most magnanimous mouse."

THE Nonsuch had already undergone a general refit. Hulked in Hamoaze for six weeks and upwards, the "Little Liners" began to diminish in muster. "The victualling list" assumed a sensible decrease. What with "long leave,"‡ and "short leave," and "French leave," and, as Toms termed it, "dissatisfied hands taking to their legs and walking Spanish," her complement had faded down to a Flemish account.

This decrease of the ship's crew excited in Leatherlungs considerable concern ; but, in the senator, it produced a feeling the very reverse, inasmuch, as the "short

\* Sir Robert Calder engaged the combined fleets for four hours in a dense fog.

† Another sobriquet for Admiral Cornwallis.

‡ When the foremastmen obtain leave to go home and see their friends, the permission is technically termed 'long leave.'

of complement return" afforded to Sir Montague, now that Parliament was up, a plausible pretext for further extension of leave. During the protracted period in which the ship had been refitting in port, and while Leatherlungs had been labouring like a slave, Sir Montague was loitering his time in town, employing every effort, in conjunction with his "motherly wife," (as Lawrence had styled the senator's spouse,) to keep pace with the fashionable follies of the day.

Indeed, save in some trifling disparity of two or three-and-twenty years of age, the dowager countess and her loving lord were well suited. Lady Puffington had long borne the reputation of being the most unmeaning, pompous, stiffly-starched piece of antiquated pride that ever pampered pug or poodle within a coroneted carriage. The besotted vanity of giving aristocratic dinners engrossed all her thoughts; and composing paragraphic puffs descriptive of her "splendid fetes" and "elegant entertainments," for the fashionable columns of the Morning Post, occupied all her literary leisure. But, though weak in mind, feeble and decrepid in frame, still the countess was strong in purse; and the senator was too much of a statesman not to preserve amicable relations with his ancient ally.

But to our tale.

At length the Nonsuch departed port. Hamoaze was lightened of the Little Liner. The ship had already taken up her berth in Cawsand Bay, where she was to complete her complement, till Sir Montague had finished fatiguing his friends in town.

"The admiral's tender 's hailing, sir," cried Weatherley, standing on the break of the poop.

"The deuce she is," returned the first lieutenant, flying to the gangway.

"She wants to come alongside, sir. She's full o' men," rejoined the quarter-master.

"I say, Toms, look there," said Leatherlungs, presenting his glass to his messmate, after taking a searching view of the vessel closing under sail. "Look there! by the Lord Harry, the tender's decks are swarming with Lord-Mayor's-men, and jail-birds of every cut an' colour. Twig how they've docked their long togs. Did ye ever see such a beggarly brown-coated greasy group? Why,

there's not a blue jacket among 'em. By the Immaculate Man! it's too bad, and we're short of A. B.'s."

"Never mind! grin and bear it; our luck's to come," returned Toms, consolingly.

The cutter had now shot up alongside of the ship, a venerable "young gentleman," pertaining to the guardship, attired in a greasy garb which had once passed muster for the uniform of a muster's mate, presented to Leatherlungs on the quarter-deck a "lot of five-and-forty newly raised men."

"Well, hand 'em up," said the first lieutenant. "Let's have a look at 'em. Not troubled, I take it, with bad an' baggage. Wont requires a whip on the main-yard, eh? Come, Mr. Langur, muster these men on the larboard side of the quarter-deck. Let them toe a line, till we see what they're made of."

The "docked-tailed" fraternity had now to answer to the interrogations of the first lieutenant.

"What were you, my man, before you left your friends?" asked Leatherlungs, addressing the first on the list, with his wonted bluntness.

"I'd no friends to leave, sir," responded the interrogated, in a broad Milwaukeean brogue.

"Lucky fellow! What trade were you?"

"What trade was I? Nothin' trade ever troubled me. My father before me was a gentleman, but - -"

"Oh! we don't want gentlemen a-board a man-o'-war," interrupted Leatherlungs. "Yer gentlemen are d-d troublesome fellows afloat. Mr. Langur," added the first lieutenant, "let this gentleman do his duty in the star-board watch of the waist. And where do you come from, my man?" proceeded Leatherlungs, addressing a miserable, half starved, bilious-looking wight, clad in a tailless coat, which was closely buttoned up to the throat, to conceal his lack of linen.

"I comes from Lammun, sir."

"What's your trade?"

"A silk weaver, sir."

"A fine spun blade, indeed. And what were you, my man?" continued Leatherlungs, turning to the next in rotation.

"Ven business vorn't slack, I jobbed a little in the black line; but, ye see, sir, the season was so worry healthy,

master vos hobligated to discharge most o' his men, and *me* 'mongst the rest."

"Ah! I see: the black line, I suppose, is another name for a sweep?"

"No, sir," returned the cockney, indignantly, "mine vos a more respectabler bisness nor that ere."

"Well, come, what was this respectable business?"

"A hundertaker's man, sir."

The confession of this calling was too much for Leatherlungs, who loudly ejaculated, "By the Immaculate Man! this beats *some* of our turnpike bills. What do you think of that, eh, Toms?"

"Think—that we shall now have funerals performed on the shortest notice."

The heroes of Tower-hill had now, with the exception of one, answered to their several names, and confessed their several callings. Pressmen, compositors, paper-stainers, glass-blowers, sausage-makers, saddlers, and lamp-lighters were to be found in this medley muster. The last on the list was thus accosted.

"Why, my man, what age are you? You must be turned forty. Late in life to try your fortune afloat."

"I've thryed it afloat before to-day, sir," returned the speaker, in accents very trying to the Naval ear.

"What's your name?"

"Phelan Fitzgerald, sir."

"High-flying name. Purser's, I suppose. Any trade?"

"Not exactly, sir; though I have thryed two or three lines o' life in my day. Among the rest I tuck to the saa. I sarved a short time in the short pace, sir."

"In what ship?"

"In the *Juste*—Sir Edmund Nagle, sir."

"Were you in her in the Bear-Haven *business*?"

"No, sir, I left her before that."

"I see—got *leave* to see your friends, I suppose?"

"I was left *behind*, one day, sir," returned the Milesian, in a sly, significant tone.

"I understand you. Come, that's honest. Well, where did you do duty in the *Juste*?"

"I assisted the gunner's yeoman till he died; and then, as I could write a good hand, and keep the books, they made me take his place."



"Gad, you're the very fellow we want. Mr. Gordon," said Leatherlungs, turning to the gunner, "now torment me no more about another yeoman: here's one ready made to your hand—take him. Fitzgerald, understand you'll do duty as gunner's yeoman."

And so saying, the first lieutenant dismissed the motley group, consigning them over to the tender sympathies of the mate of the lower deck.

Doubtless, in the newly-appointed gunner's yeoman, the reader will readily recognise an old acquaintance. Mr. Phelan Fitzgerald was no other than the valorous Phelan O'Flinn, who had sunk his patronimic, thinking even at that period the great *O'* prefixed to his name was not likely to serve him afloat. Since his failure in his amatory agency, O'Flinn had been sadly put to his shifts; and, in the year 1801, had to dock the tails of his long togs, and bear up for the Tower tender.

Leatherlungs had hardly dismissed his brown-coated recruits, ere the midshipman, who had been sent ashore for the ship's letters, delivered into his hand an epistle from Lawrence, who had been for some days absent on Admiralty leave.

The subjoined, as Mr. Waddy would say, is a true copy of the reverend gentleman's letter.

"London, October 15th, 180-  
"Salopian Coffee-house.

"My dear Leatherlungs,

"Difficulty in procuring franks at Harley-street must plead my apology for not writing before. The *free* list in that quarter seems only to be extended to the favoured few.

"Twice within the week have I called and left a card, which might as well have been dropped in the fore-hold. The shoulder-knotted gentry of a certain establishment are the pertest puppies that ever powder'd pate or strutted in silken hose. Any gentleman's card, to which may be affixed the letters R. N. is received with a sneer and cock of the nose, as if the olfactory nerves of the laced lacquey suffered from the effluvia of pitch and tar. The French have an adage, '*Tel maître, tel valet*,' which Toms will tell you, signifies, 'Like master, like man.'

"Yesterday, however, I was fortunate enough to find the dowager's most influential footman in a patronising mood.—'Her ladyship,' said he, receiving my card, 'I think is disposed to see *you* to-day; and, without saying another word, the fellow leisurely ascended the drawing-room stairs, hailed me from the top of the landing 'to walk up.' Little prepared was Pill-garlick for the salute under which he was about to be received. Talk of a royal salute, the din was nothing compared to the canine cry that assailed my ears the moment the drawing-room door was opened, and my name announced. Fancy a couple of cock-tailed, black-nosed, fat pugs—a brace of white-whiskered, lion-crested poodles—a hairless Italian greyhound—and a bow-legged, waddling lap-dog, suddenly starting from their respective rugs, giving tongue and yelling in different discordant keys. Never was beggar with wallet on his back so bow-wow'd and bark'd at. Her ladyship sought to command silence; but the dowager seems to have about the same notion of commanding dogs, that *Some-of-us* have of commanding men. 'Sit down, sir,' said she, dictatorially: 'the dogs require you only to be seated, to be silent.' But the dowager was out in her reckoning: the undisciplined and spoilt pets kept up the yell for several minutes after I had taken to my chair.

"Despite of paint and patches, the countess is indisputably the most stiff, stately, unsightly piece of pomposity I ever saw. If antiquity can entitle her to claim prescriptive veneration, she certainly has a right to seek general adoration. How any man, arriving at the years of discretion, could have selected for a spouse such a fleshless piece of faded furniture, is to me a perfect puzzle.—Positively, she is a true antidote to love; and her cold and icy deportment must, even in the sharer of her purse, freeze every thing like a feeling of friendship. And yet, although her ladyship must have seen her sixty-fifth summer, she speaks of her '*dear* Sir Montague' and languishes her great glassy goggles as if she were a newly-made bride of eighteen.

"Yesterday, I met, in Charing Cross, your old friend, Sir Christopher Blunt. He is just the same rattling fellow as ever. His opinion of *Some-of-us* is very flattering. *He says*, as usual, that he gives the go-bye to every bro-

ther Blue he meets in the street, and cuts direct every R. N. he may happen to meet in his walks west of Somerset House. But the other day, when lounging in Bond Street, in company with a Right Hon. nob, Sir Christopher brought him up all standing. I think I never heard a readier retort. 'Well!' said *Some-of-us*, who had under his arm the lavender-scented Lord C——; 'well, Blunt, what are *you* doil' il towl, eh?' 'I was just thinking,' retorted Sir Kit, 'as I saw you swaggering up, to put the same question to *you*; but, 'pon my soul, I could n't bring myself to be sufficiently impertinent!' Blunt tells me that the baronet blushed blue, and that the sweet-scented peer looked particularly sour.

"Sir Kit related to me an excellent anecdote touching the awkward position in which the dowager's sudden indisposition placed the whole of the Harleyn household.

"Lady Puffington had issued cards for a 'tearing rout;' but on the afternoon of the night on which her crammed rooms were to suffocate her aristocratic friends, her ladyship was seized with a sudden attack of what her medical attendant termed 'determination of blood to the head.' The baronet never was so beset. His pen was going at the rate of ten knots an hour, putting off his numerous invited guests. Footmen, coachmen, grooms, helpers, and stable boys, were despatched in all directions. One flying to the Duchess of D——, another to the Countess This, the Viscountess That, Lord So-and-so, and Sir Somebody Something. But in his anxiety to postpone his party, it had quite escaped the baronet's recollection to recall the *paid* puff descriptive of her ladyship's fête, which had been sent for insertion, and which, on the following morning, duly appeared in the fashionable columns of the Morning Post. Sir Christopher says, the *exposé* will hasten *Some-of-us* back to Plymouth. By-the-by, I understand we are doomed to return to our old station. *Some-of-us* would insinuate that Lord Nelson was most anxious for his company off Cadiz. His lordship's peculiar discernment, in knowing the 'right sort,' would warrant the suspicion that *Some-of-us* was drawing the 'long bow.'

"Tell Toms his glass is thoroughly repaired. Dolland says, it is now as good as new. And pray acquaint young Darcy that his mother is in good health, but complains

sadly of his silence. I hope the caulkers in the gun-room have not capsised my traps, but I dare say Toms has taken care of my books. Tell the General that it is no easy matter to find a sash long enough to encircle twice his delicate waist. Remember me to all my messmates. I shall leave town the day after to-morrow.

"Adieu, ever yours,

"My dear Leatherlungs,

"LAWRENCE LAWRENCE.

"P.S. The baronet rides daily in Hyde Park, mounted on a long-tailed long-backed white steed. Sir Kit says that the wags at the west end designate him the 'Sea Horse!' but that *he* has found for him a more appropriate name, and calls him the '*Fresh-Water Ass!*'"

## CHAPTER XVII.

"Inhospitable churl!

Thou dost forget thine own place, and my claims.  
*Thine* house! 'Tis mine, and I will compel thee  
 To a more civil course."

MASSINGER.

SINCE we last left the Little Liner in Cawsand Bay, the battle of Trafalgar and several other glorious actions had been added to the proud memorials of our annals, whilst the Nonsuch, from Sir Montague's predilection for parliamentary napping, continued on the pleasurable service of "Channel groping." For two years longer were the officers and crew doomed to fret and fag on this harassing service, whilst, pending the greater portion of the time, the senator's place was supplied by an acting captain.

During this period, the history of the Nonsuch was barren of any event worthy of record; and therefore the "log" of His Majesty's ship, to use the official phrase of our "Affectionate Friends," has been purposely "dispensed with."

The Nonsuch was now at Portsmouth, where she had been ordered to be paid. While here, Darcy received intelligence from his mother of the sudden death of Wad-

dy, who expired on the Northern circuit during the dog-days. He had been much excited in court, by a perverse and abusive witness; and after great exertion, followed by a verdict against his client, he left the court in a violent bodily heat, drank cold water, was seized by a raging fever, and died, after an illness of two days.

Mrs. Waddy was at this time enjoying the sea-breezes at Dover, at which place young Darcy, now entering his seventeenth year, was summoned to attend her, that he might consult with her on the new position wherein she was placed by the death of her husband. Leave being obtained from Sir Montague Mute, the young man started from Portsmouth to London; and having promised his messmate Fuller, that he would convey a packet from him to his family residing near Hythe, Darcy sent his baggage onwards, cut across from Canterbury to the house of his friend's father, delivered his charge, and walked thence to Hythe, where he understood a coach would convey him to Dover. He had miscalculated the length of his walk, which was retarded by most untoward weather; and on arriving at Hythe, he ascertained that no conveyance for Dover was to be had that night.

In this predicament, he looked about for a place where he could put up; and, after some search, came upon the only house which seemed to give any indication of "entertainment for man or beast." It was a little low tavern, denominated the "Lord Howe," into which he entered, and called lustily about him, requiring supper and a bed.

"Very sorry, sir, but you can't have a bed here to-night," said the landlord, in answer to his application.

"Then, here I remain, in this parlour. Tack or sheet, I don't start. Where else am I on such a night as this to seek shelter? Seven-eighths of the inhabitants of this dull, dreary, petrified-looking town of yours are a'bed and asleep. Not a light is to be seen anywhere, though it's only ten o'clock; so, my friend, I repeat that, whether you have a bed to spare or not, I don't intend to move out of this house to-night. Hark at the rain! Do you suppose I'm so in love with a wet skin, as to seek it in the streets this drenching weather? No, no, thank you. Bad enough to be soaked with salt water at sea. What *can I have for supper?*"

"Why, I'm sorry to say I ar'n't got nothing in the house," replied the landlord, rather sulkily.

"Well, well, I'm not particular. A couple of eggs and a rasher will do.

"We fried our last bit of bacon to-day along with some liver, and there ar'n't none left; and as to eggs, Lord bless you! we never has any of our own laying, for the bum-boat women belonging to Deal comes over here, and carries 'em by cart-loads to the men-of-war in the Downs."

"You may tell that to the marines," observed Darcy.

"We know too well what men-of-war's eggs are. However, some supper I must have. I'm not going to sit up all night upon an empty stomach. Have you no cold meat?"

"Not a bit, sir."

"No cheese?"

"Why, sir, being rather short off for dinner to-day, we were obligated to make out with the cheese, and there ar'n't nothing but the rind left."

"Rather agreeable, this," muttered Darcy.

"Very sorry," said the landlord; "but my house, you see, ar'n't calculated for travellers. We never has no other company but a few neighbours, as drops in to take their glass o' liquor, one with the tother, in a friendly way, so we never provides nothing to eat. But, there's another house in the place, and I shouldn't wonder if they could cook you a bit of some'ut, provided they ar'n't gone to bed."

Darcy was beginning to feel that his resolution to remain was rather shaken, and to deliberate within himself whether he had not better take the landlord's advice, and look out for other quarters, when a savoury vapour, as if some culinary operation was going on at no great distance, was perceptible in the room. Darcy's olfactory nerves had been rendered too keen by his walk across the country not to detect this, even in its first faint approaches. Looking hard at his host, who seemed rather embarrassed, he said,

"Why, landlord, how is this? You tell me I can't have any supper, when, by Jove, I smell most decided symptoms of as good a meal as would satisfy the port-admiral of Portsmouth. Come, come, man, don't be so

shy of me. I can pay well enough for what I eat and drink; so put me a knife and fork on your supper-table to-night."

"Supper-table! Why, Lord love you, sir, we've had our supper a matter o' two hours ago. My wife's gone to bed, and I was going to follow her when you knocked at the door."

"How, then," rejoined Darcy, "do you account for this smell of cooking?"

"Why, now you speak of it, I *do* smell something, certainly," said Boniface. "Oh, I know what it is," he continued: "it's old Patty cleaning out the frying-pan as we had our bacon and liver fried in to-day for dinner. Poor old soul! she's mighty particular in keeping her pots and pans clean and wholesome."

Darcy could urge nothing further, though he did not believe a word the landlord said. One thing, however, was clear, namely, that the man wanted to get rid of him: a conviction that only strengthened the young midshipman's determination to stay. He felt that, being a traveller, he had a right to remain in any place of public entertainment; and, moreover, his curiosity and suspicion were so roused by his host's conduct, that he was determined not to budge. So he settled himself in his chair, told the landlord to bring him a tankard of ale and a crust of bread, and took up his position for the night.

Seeing that the determination of his guest was not to be shaken, the host, evidently disconcerted, withdrew to the tap-room or kitchen, separated from the apartment where Darcy sat only by a wooden partition. In this a buxom wench was occupied, by the light of a blazing fire, frying sausages, while around her stood three or four sea-faring men, in rough pea-jackets, and one in a smock frock.

"I say, Robinson," said the landlord to one of the men, "you must eat your supper in silence to-night, and by the kitchen fire, too."

"Why so?"

"Because this here young fellow as come in half an hour ago, means to keep possession of the parlour, and wont turn out till morning."

"*Wont* turn out! Turn him over to me: I'll soon

see how the land lies. No, no; it wont do for the likes of he to clap a stopper on our fun for the night."

"I tell you what, Robinson," rejoined the host, "you had better mind what you 're about. The young chap is a mettlesome kind of fellow; and, moreover, he's a naval officer."

"So much the better: manage him the sooner. Easiest chaps in the world to manage, if you only takes 'em on the right tack. Capital fellows ashore: always spends their money like men."

Robinson had already left the landlord, and entered the parlour.

"Sarvant, sir," said he, approaching Darcy. "Wet night, sir: a dirtier one I never seed."

"Dirty, indeed," returned Darcy; "for which reason, I suppose, one is doomed to meet with dirty treatment."

"What's the matter, sir? you seem to be a little out of sorts, or so."

"You would be out of sorts too, old fellow, were you refused bed and board on such a night. Pretty thing, indeed, after a wet walk, to throw oneself down on the deck, and prick for the softest plank."

"Need n't do that, young gemman. I dare say some 'un can find you a bed in the town."

"Do you belong to the house?" asked Darcy.

"No, sir, I has a house of my own."

"Well, can't you give me a shake down for the night?"

"Why, I might, if so be as the old woman was at home; but she's been away now more nor a week, doctoring our only daughter as lays ill at Dover."

"That 's the very thing, then. I can get your daughter's bed."

"No, you can't. She's got her bed with her."

"You appear all alike, a most inhospitable set. You should be sent somewhere to learn manners."

"I 've learned manners afore to-day."

"You! why, were you ever at sea?"

"A man may be a sea-faring man, and not much at sea, neither."

"How came you to wear that wagoner's frock then?"

"'Cause I 've changed my line o' life."



"Ah, I smell a rat. Run from the service, eh?" said Darcy.

"No, I never *runs* on any service but my own. I was once a river-pilot."

"A river-pilot, eh? You're the very man for me; for as the street to-night is little better than a running river, I shall require a pilot to conduct me to my moorings, if I'm to go out for a bed. Come, old fellow, I'll give you a crown for a shake down to-night."

"Do you mean at my house, sir?"

"Yes, why not?"

"I does n't sleep there myself."

"Perhaps that's the reason you sent the old woman away. But talking is dry work. Suppose we have a glass of grog together."

"No objection in the world, sir, I'll go to the landlord, and order some."

Robinson left the room, and two glasses of rum and water were speedily brought in by a servant girl.

"Pray, my dear," said Darcy, "who is that talkative old fellow in the smock frock?"

"A friend of master's, sir."

"Do you think he can give me a bed?"

"He can, if he likes; for he's a housekeeper, and a man well to do in the world. He wants me to go and live with him."

"Well, and why don't you?"

"Servant-maids never stays long with him, sir."

"Why not?" inquired Darcy.

"'Cause they say that queer noises are heard in his house in the middle of the night time; and you know, sir, that girls don't like to be frightened out of their sleep."

"Queer noises!" echoed Darcy, smiling. "Not so bad, I suppose, as holy-stoning over a fellow's head in the morning watch."

"Can't say, sir."

"Well, I should have no objection to sleep in his house. I don't mind noise."

"I do so wish you would sleep just for once at Mr. Robinson's, sir. A real gentleman, and, moreover, a *naval officer* like you are, would soon drive the ghosts

away to the bottom of the Red Sea ; and then the girls would n't be frightened no more."

Robinson now returned to the room ; the glasses were quickly emptied ; and, mollified by the liquor, the old man consented that Darcy should have a bed for the night in his house, towards which the new companions now started.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

" Yonder shines Aurora's harbinger ;  
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,  
Troop home to church yards ; damned spirits all,  
That in cross-ways and floods have burial,  
Already to their wormy beds are gone !" *MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.*

PASSING along one or two of the narrow back streets of the town, Darcy and his companion soon emerged into the open country ; and, after walking about a quarter of a mile further, came in front of a solitary, bare, and formal brick building, separated from the highway by an open fence, inclosing a few yards of coarse and rank turf.

" Here we are, sir," said Robinson, opening the gate to admit his companion. " The house is a very old one, and not in the best repair ; but it is weather-tight, I believe," he added, as he knocked at the door : " it does n't want caulking, as you say at sea."

The summons not being heeded, the old man knocked again more loudly, and apologised to his guest for the delay, by saying that he feared his old woman had fallen asleep.

" Why," said Darcy, " you told me, she was gone to Dover, to see her daughter."

" That was my wife. She in-doors is a poor old silly creatur as cleans the place, and waits upon us."

He had no sooner spoken than the door was opened. " Why, Margery," said Robinson, " I thought you did n't mean to let me in to-night. It's rough weather to keep one at the door."

" You said you was n't coming home again to-night," replied the woman, casting a surprised and inquisitive

glance at Darcy; "and so," she continued, "I was just going to bed."

"Well, well, you sha'n't be kept up long," rejoined Robinson. "I'm going into the town again directly, and so you must just change the sheets, and let this young gemman sleep in my bed for to-night."

"In *your* bed!" echoed the old woman.

"Yes, to be sure. Is n't it the best in the house?"

"Very well, Mr. Robinson; only you know there's \_\_\_\_\_"

"Do what I tells you, and say no more about it," interposed Robinson. "And d' ye hear, as the young gemman's clothes are rather wet, just put a light to the fire (it's all ready laid,) and then he can sit down, while you are getting the sheets ready. Good night, sir," he added to Darcy. "I leave you in Margery's hands. Good night."

Darcy was beginning to think the whole affair wore rather a strange aspect, when the woman scattered his cogitations by bidding him follow her.

They ascended a wide, old-fashioned staircase, and soon entered the room destined for his reception. The little light afforded by the rush candle in the crone's hand was scarcely strong enough to display the extent of the apartment, which, in this imperfect view, looked bare and gloomy.

Darcy did not much like the appearance of things, but there were many reasons to forbid retreat. Where else should he get a bed? If he left his present shelter, he must go back to the surly landlord, and what would Boniface think? He should most probably meet Robinson again, and what would *he* think? Then, if the story got abroad, that he had been frightened by a lonely house and an old woman, what would *his messmates* think? But, above all, what would the young and pretty servant-girl at "The Lord Howe" think, who paid him so many compliments as a brave gentleman, and a naval officer?

No, no: he felt he must stay where he was, happen what might.

Old Margery had now lighted the fire, which being composed chiefly of wood, soon burned brightly, and cast a glow over the apartment which enabled Darcy to examine it more fully. It contained three uncurtained win-

dows. The furniture consisted of a couple of old-fashioned, unwieldy chairs, with high backs; a deal table; two or three sea-chests; an antiquated four-post bedstead, with formal, faded, stuff hangings. Nothing else was in the chamber: there was no chest of drawers, nor even a wash-hand stand. The comfortless air resulting from this paucity of furniture, was not a little increased by the capacious dimensions of the apartment.

Having made the bed, and seen that all was as comfortable as the nature of things admitted, the old woman, depositing the candle on the table, dropped a courtesy to Darcy, and left him to himself. He listened attentively to her footsteps, as, in a sort of heavy limp, she descended the stairs; and his ear (so at least it seemed to him) traced her progress to the front door, and even to the outer gate.

"What!" thought Darcy, "is the old lady gone? And am I to be the only inhabitant to-night of this crazy tenement? A pleasant berth I have of it! A haunted house, too. It's all vastly agreeable, I must confess. I suppose I'm on the brink of an adventure. Well, it's better, after all, than reefing tautsels on a squally night; only I wish Fuller was with me. Two midshipmen are a match for the devil himself; but, however, ghosts or no ghosts, here's turn in, for I am excessively tired."

The young man soon divested himself of his apparel, and took possession of the bed, which, contrary to the general appearance of the room, was comfortable enough. But, in spite of fatigue, sleep did not seem disposed to come near Darcy. Though a positive skeptic in all matters of alleged supernatural agency, he began to feel a little excited by his peculiar situation, not to mention the hints dropped by the girl at the alehouse. Every part of his frame seemed restless. His mind, too, became painfully alert, and conjured up many disagreeable apprehensions, and not a few of the most painful recollections of his life. Had he suffered himself to be entrapped in a den of thieves? This was not very likely; inasmuch as it was notorious that midshipmen were not often overburthened with cash. Was he to be made the victim of some practical hoax? There might be something in this; and if so, he resolved to inflict the mark of his dirk on

any one who should be mischievous enough to attempt to annoy him.

From ruminations such as these, his thoughts reverted to his mother; to the misfortunes of her early life, which she had often narrated to him; to her ill-assorted union with Waddy; and, above all, to the assassination of his father.

Meanwhile the gloom of the forlorn-looking room deepened more and more: the wood fire, which at first blazed cheerily enough, had now dropped into mere embers, whose gleam scarcely penetrated beyond the hearth; the flames of the rush light were faint and flickering; and the deep silence which surrounded the place, broken only by the ceaseless pattering of the rain against the windows, instead of lulling the imagination, kept it in a state of constant suspicion and expectation.

How long Darcy remained in this state of watchfulness, he knew not; but on a sudden, while he was brooding over the sanguinary atrocity perpetrated on his father, he heard low, heavy, measured footsteps ascending the stairs. He listened anxiously; and, if the truth may be confessed, with a throbbing heart. The steps approached his room; the latch was lifted; the door turned slowly on its hinges; and a figure, in an old-fashioned costume, stalked towards the bed, drew back the curtains, and extending his arms affectionately over Darcy, uttered the word "Frances!" The young man looked up at the face of the apparition, and saw that it bore a serious expression; but as he gazed, the phantom turned away, as if to depart, once more speculating "Frances!"

If Darcy felt the excitement of fear, that of curiosity was still stronger. He suddenly resolved that the specter should not quit the room without being questioned, and accordingly he darted forth his hand to seize it. The action, like the stroke of a magician's wand, brought a new scene to view. Darcy gazed around him; the door was closed, and the room was bathed in the strong light of day.

A moment's reflection served to convince the young man that he had unconsciously fallen asleep, while thinking of his father's fate, and so continued till broad morning: that his ghostly interluder was nothing more than the fruit of a vivid dream. On looking at his watch, and

finding the hour to be nine, he sprung out of bed, put on his clothes, and prepared to sally forth in search of breakfast.

But he could not shake from his mind the vision of his dream.

Just as he was about to leave the house, he was encountered, as he descended the stairs, by his landlord, who said,—

“Why, surely you don’t mean to go without breakfast, sir? Nobody ever slept in my house and left it without a morning’s meal. Hope you had a good night?”

“Why, not exactly,” returned Darcy. “Do you know, my friend, that queer stories are afloat about your residence?”

“What, you’ve heard ’em, have you? Lord love you! they belonged to the place long afore I took it. Nothing like a ghost for bringing down house-rent. Now, let me ax you just one simple question:—do you suppose I could live in such a big roomy place as this, if it hadn’t got a bad name? But, however, I hope nothing didn’t molest you in the night. At any rate you’ve had a good long snooze of it.”

“Why, don’t you know,” replied Darcy, “that when one has not slept well during the night, one is apt to make up the lee-way after dawn?”

“To be sure; but come, tell me what it was that kept you awake. Did you hear any *noise*?” added Robinson, with an expression of anxiety.

“None: all was unusually quiet.”

“Then a fig for the ghosts,” said Robinson, slapping his thigh.

Being pressed to declare what had made him so sleepless, Darcy described his dream, and concluded by saying, that he could not get the appearance of the phantom out of his mind’s eye; neither could he free his ears from the sound of the word “France!” which was uttered with such emphatic distinctness.

“Well,” said Robinson, “that’s queer enough. I hope you’re not gulling me about France and the ghost. I can take a hint as well as most folks; though, mind ye, don’t go too far. I’ve served you when another wou’d n’t, and therefore I looks for something better nor treachery in return.”

"Treachery! What does the man mean? I comprehend you not," said Darcy, pointedly.

"Mayhap not; better ye shou'd n't. Come, come along, sir, breakfast is ready in the parlour."

As they were seated at table, Robinson said to his guest,

"Now, I look at ye, sir, by daylight, you reminds me much of a gemman as I carries, about eighteen years ago, aboard a wessel bound for New York. I shall never forget him; he seemed in terrible trouble, and in a dreadful hurry to catch hold o' the ship. The wessel sailed from Lunnun without him, but was to wait at Gravesend for orders. I never in all my born days see two people so much alike as you and that gemman."

"What was his name?" inquired Darcy.

"I never could find it out," replied Robinson. "I was a pilot in those days, sir; but I've altered my line o' life a little. It's a troublesome trade, a river pilot. You've always to answer for any little mischief as may be done to a craft in backing and filling up and down with the tide. I remember once getting a precious badgering in a matter of this kind from a little crooked-eyed lawyer in the Court of Common Pleas, though the Court did n't *please* me much. I then went by the name of Jolly Jem, but here they claps a handle to my name. I'm now never called nothing but *Mister* Robinson."

The mention of the Court of Common Pleas, and, above all, of the "crooked eyes" of the cross examining lawyer, excited a suspicion in Darcy's mind, that his late very affectionate and respected step-father was the person alluded to. He accordingly asked if Robinson recollected the barrister's name.

"To be sure I does," replied the quondam pilot, "'twas Waddy; and a more sneaking, lubberly, saucy son of a —"

Though the rising invective would have been music to Darcy's ears, so much did he sympathise with Mr. Robinson's view of Waddy's character, still the young man had too much good taste to listen to it, though his relationship to the subject could not be suspected. He therefore cut short the stream of Jolly Jem's eloquence, by consulting him as to a conveyance for Dover.

Being informed that a coach would start in half an hour, the young midshipman thanked his host for his hos-

pitality, bade him adieu, repaired to the town, engaged a place outside the "Highflyer," and was soon in possession of half the coach box.

As the well-fed steeds rattled along, he and coachee got upon familiar terms, and in the course of conversation, Darcy mentioned that he had slept the preceding night in a haunted house.

"Whereabouts might that have been?" inquired the coachman.

Darcy described the locality, and mentioned Robinson's name.

"A haunted house! Haunted, indeed! Plenty o' *spirits* there; do you twig?"

"What, then, you mean to say that my host is a smuggler?"

"To be sure I do. But how came *you* there, sir? They don't much like your cloth," he added, glancing at the young officer's uniform.

Darcy having narrated his adventure at the inn, the coachman explained the matter, by saying:

"I'm not surprised at what you tell me. They had a *run* last night, and in course they wanted you to *walk*. But it was a bold step in Robinson to shut you up in his house. I'm glad you got out of it in a safe skin," he added, pulling up, and throwing the reins out of his hands as they arrived at Dover.

Darcy was delighted to meet his mother, but he could not shake off the impression of his dream.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

"Becal'm'd like a log, a target we lay,  
Till we takes to the steel, and settles the fray."

GALLEY SONG.

Having spent a few days with his mother, and assisted her in certain arrangements relative to her property, which had now fallen into her uncontrolled possession, Darcy returned to his ship. He had no duties of condolence to perform as regarded his mother's bereavement. It would have been affectation in either party to exhibit



much emotion on the death of Waddy, and nothing could be more incompatible than affectation and Darcy's mother.

The youth's leave being limited, he was compelled to return to Portsmouth without delay. On the afternoon when he joined the ship, he happened to be in the ward-room communicating the result of his journey to his friend the chaplain, when Leatherlungs, with a folded letter in his hand, thus exclaimed:

"Hear the news? *Some-of-us* are done—regularly diddled. Unshipped for the borough. True bill;—beat by a majority of twenty-seven. Here it is—have it from his own hand. Well! it's an ill wind that blows nobody good. Bet a quarterly\* the ship's now ordered foreign for a freight."

With the exception of Sir Montague's "followers," who had been unwilling to comprehend the first lieutenant's terseness, the officers of the ward-room were all delighted to learn that a General Election had deprived the baronet of the privilege of napping in the Senate. All agreed that there was an end to Channel-groping; and that the ex-senator's loss of seat would be followed by either a profitable freight for himself, or a pleasurable cruise for the ship. Nor were these predictions at fault. At this period, a new governor was appointed to Gibraltar, and through the unceasing importunity of Lady Puffington in a certain quarter, the Nonsuch was selected to carry out his Excellency and suite.

For three weeks the ship had been detained at Spithead preparing for the Governor's reception. The people had been paid; and as such untoward occurrences do sometimes succeed pay day on board a vessel of war, the top-man Long brought ast upon the quarter-deck the gunner's yoeman Fitzgerald, accusing the latter of having "lightened his bag," as Long phrased it, "of a two-pound bran-new Abraham Newland."

"What have you to say for yourself, Mr. Fitzgerald?" said Sir Montague, addressing the accused.

"I say, sir," returned Fitzgerald, in accents of deep indignation, "it's an infamous and scandalous libel, to charge any honest man with so foul an offence."

"Oh! ho! you are goil to lay dowl the law, are you?"

\* Quarterly pay

Why, Mr. Leatherluls, this fellow is a regular sea-lawyer."

The first lieutenant made no reply.

"Ye may 'pend on it, Sir Montagu," said Long, "there's never another man in the mess as would have gutted the bag but himself."

"It's a lie! an infernal lie," ejaculated Fitzgerald.

"Mr. Leatherluls, put this Irish ruffian both legs in irols, and let a canvass badge with 'THIER' painted on it with large letters, be stiched on the back of the fellow's jacket. I only wish I could bring it home to him—he should rul the gaultlet."

"Thry me, Captain, by a Coort Martial if ye please, and let me clear meself."

"I'll do lo such thil', sir. A pretty thil' ildeed, to detail the ship for a court martial ol *you*, when the goverlor embarks to-morrow. Away with him, master-at-arms—clap him both legs il irols."

"It's cruel traitment, so it is," muttered Fitzgerald, retiring under charge of the master-at-arms.

Long was again interrogated, and every man of his mess attested circumstances which carried with them a strong presumption of Fitzgerald's guilt. But the note had not been found. And, though on the following noon Fitzgerald had been released from irons, and desired to return to his duty in the store-room, still was he doomed to carry upon his back the damning word.

The governor had now embarked; and on the following noon the Nonsuch was seen spanking down Channel with a flowing sheet and gusty gale. The ship made a rapid "run." On the fifth afternoon succeeding his departure from Portsmouth, his Excellency was favoured with a distant view of the Rock. The governor, on deck, was straining his eyes to discern 'O'Hara's Folly';\* but he was first destined to have his eyes opened to a folly he had little looked for. The wind had been failing fast, and from Sir Montague's disregard, or rather perverse opposition to the prudent suggestions of the master, the ship on the following dawn was found verging the entrance of the Straits, and entrapped in a treacherous calm.

\* A monumental heap of rubbish, erected by General O'Hara on the summit of Gibraltar Rock.

The morning watch had passed apace. The forenoon had already commenced. Not a cloud hung in the "roof of heaven," nor was a breeze stirring aloft. The sun shone with dazzling splendour. Its scorching rays had rendered the day, early as it was, oppressively hot. Tar was seen to drip from every rope, and pitch to drain from every seam.

"What a magnificent scene!" exclaimed the chaplain, glancing at the broad lights and the deep gigantic shadows which diversified the different heights and cavities of the European coast. "How strikingly picturesque is that lofty and extensive chain of blue-tinted mountains! What aerial perspective! What a truly Italian sky. How warm the glow!"

"Warm, indeed," interrupted Leatherlungs: "you'll have something, parson, warmer to look at before long. I know those fellows of old. It's nuts to them to catch a craft in a start calm."

The parson now descended the poop, leaving the first lieutenant and master abast.

The ship lay an unmanageable log rising and falling on the undulating deep, which, from the reflection of the azure vault overhead, partook of the brightest blue. The spars aloft, bulk-heads below, and creaking guns, were tiring the ear with monotonous noise; whilst the 'whole top-sails,' and taunt 'gallant sails, were flapping with furious force by the oscillating motion of the ship.

"By the Immaculate Man! master, here are seven thundering gun-boats fast pulling up on our starboard quarter," ejaculated Leatherlungs, looking through his long glass over the hammock-netting of the poop.

Muddle's Dollond soon confirmed the statement of the first lieutenant, who had already entered the cabin, to report to his superior the gratifying news.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the astounded baronet, turning to his excellency, "this is rather unpleasant tidings, goverlor. Not exactly prepared for this. What had we better do, Mr. Leatherlungs?" added Sir Montague, who was never known to ask or follow an inferior's advice except when compelled in moments of pressing emergency.

"Beat to quarters to be sure, sir, and pepper the vagabonds, if they'll allow us to bring a gun to bear on 'em;

but I know these Long-Tom-Turks are very expert in preserving the point of impunity."

"Well; come Mr. Leatherluls, beat to quarters. You'll excuse me, goverlor; you cal stay in the after cabil 'till the ship's clear for actiol; ald thel I must consile you to the care of Doctor Dulalley, in the cock-pit."

"With your permission, Sir Montague, I'll remain on the quarter-deck until necessity *compels* me to visit the doctor below."

The rattle of the drum beating to quarters had already thrown the crew of the Little Liner into the most noisy state of excitement. All was confusion. The stools and tables pertaining to the messes on the lower deck were hove heedlessly down the several hatchways leading to the orlop. Ready-made mechanics were showing their dexterity in knocking down the bulkheads belonging to the officers "cribs" in the ward-room, as well as those pertaining to the transom-cabins on the lower deck. Maul might be seen alternately suspending the fire screens to the several hatchways on the different decks—superintending the rigging of the pumps—placing shot plugs in the different wings between wind and water, whilst the captains of the guns, in search of their respective powder-horns, were coming in collision and tumbling over powder-boys in their giddy flight for their respective boxes. Here the eye caught the Herculean boarder, wielding with one hand his naked cutlass, whilst the other was trailing along the deck the lengthy staff of his rusty pike.

Amid the confusion of clearing for action, an accident befell Dunannee, which, with the exception of Bung and his gulled patron, was hailed by all aboard as a fortuitous occurrence,—inasmuch as it precluded the possibility of his rough and unskilful hand inflicting further mischief on those who might be in need of surgical aid. In his nervous hurry to descend the cock-pit, not seeing that the two ladders on the main and lower decks leading to the orlop were already removed, for the purpose of facilitating the pass of powder from the after magazine, the M. D. was headlong precipitated into the lower regions, fracturing by his fall two of his ribs, and receiving an internal hurt, from which it was his fate never to recover.

A couple of two-and-thirty pounders had been already

transported and placed in the stern-ports of the lower-deck; and out of the ward-room windows Toms had pointed the two after eighteen pounders which pertained to his quarters abaft; but the ex-senator's "state-room" was not to be disturbed. Sir Montague had no idea of converting his after cabin into a two-gun battery.

The people were now all at their respective quarters. The guns on the upper and lower decks were run out, and trained as far aft as the cells of the ports would possibly admit.

As the first lieutenant had predicted, the enemy's gun-boats, approaching in two divisions, had taken up a position on the starboard quarter of the ship, a position which had precluded the possibility of the *Nonsuch* bringing aught of her artillery to bear. In vain were her guns opened on the closing boats, for the shot from the ship fell short and wide of their object, whilst the enemy's long-winded whistlers were wending their way through the *Little Liner's* becalmed canvass.

Correcting his range, and depressing his fire, the enemy's shot had already hulled the ship in various directions abaft. In the gun-room, two blue jackets and the stammering marine already known to the reader, were mortally wounded, whilst a four-and-twenty pounder had entered the counter between wind and water.

"Where's Mr. Maul?" cried the first lieutenant.

"Here am I, sir," said the carpenter, handing upon the poop a ballast-basket, containing tools and a couple of shot-plugs, composed of tallow and oakum.

"Can you manage to stop that shot-hole, Mr. Maul?"

"Can't say, sir."

"Do you mean to try?"

"Must do more than try."

"Well; come—do your best."

"May be, my worst, sir."

And so saying, and seating himself in the bight of a bowlin' knot, Maul, together with his basket, was leisurely lowered over the quarter in the face of the enemy's furious fire. With difficulty the carpenter succeeded in closing up the aperture, which, when accomplished, he coolly sung out,

"Poop, there! haul up when ye likes now. They must be d—d good shots if they hits the same hole again."

At this moment the gaff came tumbling down upon the heads of the royal "party," drawn up under the command of Gorge upon the poop; and the bearing-binnacle on the quarter-deck was shattered to pieces, wounding with a splinter the chaplain slightly in the hand.

"Mr. Lawrelce," said Sir Montague, in any thing but a sympathising tone, "you've lo business here; this is lot your statiol, sir."

"So it seems, sir," said Lawrence, twining his white handkerchief round the bleeding wound.

"Good gracious, Mr. Leatherluls, they'll lock the ship to pieces!" exclaimed the baronet, perceiving that another winged messenger of fate had demolished the bits upon the quarter-deck. "Good heavens! cal't we get a silgle gul to bear ol these cursed scouldrels. What *is* Mr. Toms about il the ward-room; ald what cal Mr. Giles be doil' ol the lower-deck! Lot a silgle shot is goil' il the right directiol."

"It's no usc, sir, throwing away shot, firing at these *practitioners*. By the Immaculate Man! if we don't hoist the boats out, they'll sink the ship. Only give me the boats, and I'll soon turn the tables."

"Well, out with them, Mr. Leatherluls. Cease firil'. Halds, out boats!"

The boats were hoisted out, manned, and armed, and were now seen with oars tossed up on the off side on which the enemy had brought his artillery to bear. Leatherlungs had already placed himself in the stern sheets of the barge, Toms in the pinnace, Darcy in the yawl, Leagur in the launch; and the assistant surgeon, in the first cutter, was to follow in the rear.

"Now, silence alongside," vociferated the first lieutenant. "Listen with attention. Let every man clearly understand me."

Silence being obtained, Leatherlungs thus proceeded. "Now, mind, men, there must be no straggling. We shall pull in two lines, and all within hail. We shall first attack the nearest vessel: the barge and pinnace will board on the starboard-quarter; the launch and yawl on the larboard. And bear in mind," he added, with marked emphasis, "there is only *one* way of closing your craft, and that is by running the boats directly *under* the sweeps."

"That 's the chap as knows his work well," said Potter, in an under tone. "Hear that, Mr. Darcy?"

"I hear," returned the attentive mid; "and I see the necessity of following such excellent precaution. Few would have thought of it."

"Now, are you all ready? Have ye all laniards to your boat-hooks?" inquired the first lieutenant.

Nothing of the sort had been prepared. In a few minutes a coil of inch rope was cut up into five-fathom lengths, which were thrown to the bowman of each boat to attach to his boat-hook.

"Now, then, three cheers, and shove off."

The welkin rang with the hearty hurrahs of the Little Liners.

"What a fine fellow is that first lieutenant of yours, Sir Montague," observed his excellency, looking over the side of the ship.

"Yes, pretty well as first lieutenants go," returned the baronet, leaving the governor abruptly.

"I say, Paul," cried Long, the bowman of the yawl addressing the coxswain, seated in his box abaft—"I say, Paul, now 's yer time to keep the combs and write to Bet—what say ye, my son, eh? In course ye 'll *now* show 'em what a dying man can do. Three cheers for the bago, boes."

"There ye has me, Bob," returned Potter; "but, bago or no bago, I'm blest if I does n't bend my back, and show *some* on ye the way to work with a will;" adding, under his breath, "I wishes, Mr. Darcy, we'd only Mr. Lawrence along wi' us. I'm blow'd if he would n't single handed clear a craft of a hundred of them copper-coloured Turks."

"Ah! poor fellow," said Darcy, "he has already received an ugly hit on the hand."

"What, Mr. Lawrence, sir?"

"Yes."

"I'm blest if I would n't myself sooner 'ave got a hit in the head: I'm blest if I would n't. Hurrah, my lads! Strike out, my sons! Bawlin' Bill for ever! He's the bo. He's the chap as knows his work."

Pulling out of the line of fire to which the ship was still *exposed*, the four attacking boats, followed by the cutter *reserve*, shaped a course which indicated an intention

to board the enemy on the bow. But this was only a *ruse de guerre*. Leatherlungs was too prudent a seaman to run the risk of bringing his boats head and stern with a vessel retaining her way through the water. The feint had, however, the desired effect. The enemy throwing all her men forward to repel the boarders, Leatherlungs backing his boat short round, succeeded, with the exception of the launch, in getting them under the enemy's sweeps, and eventually boarding the vessel on both quarters.

The first lieutenant was the first to board, and first to fall. Toms, on the opposite quarter, was followed in quick succession by the scrambling crew pertaining to the yawl and pinnace. The Spaniards sallied aft to repel the boarders, but the assailants made a steady stand, until Leagur, with the launchers, throwing themselves over the vessel's stern, came to their timely aid.

A swarthy, bare-armed, muscular Moor, now advancing with a handspike, made a desperate blow at Darcy's head, which, however, was fortunately averted by the timely intervention of Potter's powerful arm.

"There, take *that*, you blood-thirsty beggar!" ejaculated the tall topman, cutting down the Moor with his broad cutlass. "Take that, you thundering Turk, and larn for the futur to fight with properer tools."

Again were the enemy driven forward, and again they failed in a sally aft. All effort was fruitless. Leagur's fresh hands turned the scale. And now were heard the piteous cries of the Spaniards calling for quarter.

At this juncture Darcy perceived a second vessel approaching, with a manifest intention to rescue the captured boat.

"Look at that fellow, Mr. Toms," ejaculated the gallant youth. "Do, sir, give me the barge and pinnace."

"Leagur," interrupted the lieutenant, turning to the officer of the launch, "remain here with your crew—secure the prisoners—call the cutter alongside—place in her poor Mr. Leatherlungs and the rest of the wounded, and desire Mr. Smith to return to the ship with all possible speed."

"We may want him, sir," returned Darcy.

"True. Well, at all events, tell him to do his best for  
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the wounded. And now, Darcy, you follow me in the yawl. Yawlers, pinnacemen, and bargemen, away," cried the excited lieutenant. "Quick, boys, jump in your boats: no time 's to be lost," he added, throwing himself, sabre in hand, into the stern sheets of the pinnace.

Shoving off from the captured vessel, the three boats in a few minutes were seen to board the second vessel in a manner similar to that in which the first had been assailed: The crews of the barge and pinnace had had their complements decreased by six; for six fine fellows had been left bleeding with their gallant leader. But the deficiency was now supplied by increase of valour. Darcy threw himself in advance of his men; but Potter begged the young gemman to back astarn till he made a bit of a lane.

"Slash away, boes," ejaculated Paul, mowing the enemy down with his 'cut and thrust,' already deeply stained to the hilt with gore. "I told ye, I'd show some on ye the way to work. Dash my wig! Mr. Toms is down!"

Toms was, indeed, down. The poor lieutenant had received a sabre blow, which had nearly severed his skull; but he still breathed, and Darcy had him drawn aside.

"Another rally, my boes, and she's all our own," cried Potter, heading another charge. "Cheer up, my sons—that's you. Slash away, my brave Britons; we'll larn the lubberly beggars what it is to blister a battle-ship in a start calm."

At this juncture the ship's head was seen in the direction of the boats, and the Nonsuch, now under light and lofty sail, appeared to feel the influence of a gentle breeze which was darkening the surface of the western waters.

"Hurrah, my sons! *Here she comes*; down on the top on 'em all. See, there's three on 'em turned tail already. Now, Mr. Darcy, she's all yer own. I told ye, you could n't do better nor come with *me* in the yawl."

Potter's joyous loquacity was now succeeded by mute pleasure at seeing the commodore of the Spanish boats sullenly present his sabre to a lad, who had wielded a sword long before he had handled a razor.

The cutter had already received Leatherlungs and his

wounded companions. Hardly had he been placed in the stern-sheets of the boat, ere, opening his eyes, he exclaimed, "Ah, Smith, is that you? These fellows have given me a terrible thump here," placing his hand on his bleeding brow.

"We'll soon set this to rights," replied the assistant surgeon, wrapping a bandage round his patient's head.

"Thank you, Smith; I know I am safe in *your* hands; but for heaven's sake let Mr. Dunanney give me a wide berth. Where's Toms?"

"He, I understand, remains wounded in the other captured vessel."

"Perhaps he may need your assistance more than I do; if so, leave me, and go to his aid."

Smith would not, at such a moment, distress the first lieutenant by informing him that poor Toms had breathed his last; but replied evasively, that he was not in need of prompt assistance.

"And where's Darcy?" faintly articulated Leatherlungs.

"He's keeping, he says, the Spanish commodore's sword in trust for Mr. Leatherlungs."

"Fine fellow! Tell him to keep it himself. There's the making in that lad of another Nelson. Smith, try and place me in the bottom of the stern sheets; I can't bear to sit erect."

The boats had now taken the two captured vessels in tow, and soon closed under cover of the ship, which was fast gliding through the water under her fore and main tattered topsails, untouched top-gallant sails, royals, and top-gallant studding-sails.

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## CHAPTER XX.

"Revenge is but a frailty incident  
To craz'd and sickly minds; the poor content  
Of little souls, unable to surmount  
An injury, too weak to bear affront."

OLDHAM.

In a few hours after this affair with the enemy, the *Nonsuch*, not a little damaged in her hull, had, together

with the captured gunboats, taken up her anchorage in Gibraltar bay. The severely wounded were sent ashore to the hospital; but Leatherlungs preferred to remain under the medical care of his friend Smith. In due time the governor was landed under the usual salute; and the gallant lieutenant Toms was buried with the honours due to his rank and valour, for he was followed to the grave by the whole of the garrison.

The reader is already aware, that in point of order and discipline, the Nonsuch, even under the most favourable circumstances that might arise, during the command of Sir Montague Mute, could never be considered an efficient man of war. That her discipline had not entirely degenerated into the free-and-easy equality or lawless anarchy of a privateer, was owing to the exertions of her active first lieutenant; but now, deprived of his immediate services from the severity of his wound, and having lost by death the professional ability of his friend Toms, what but utter disorganization could be expected from the tender ministrations of the Gentle Johnny, the captain's favourite follower?

Fitzgerald's punishment had rankled in his bosom, and a spirit of mad revenge had monopolized every faculty. For several days he had maintained a moody silence—remained below in the store room—refused to take his meals with his messmates—neglected his person—and suffered his beard to grow, giving a haggard appearance to his countenance.

In this state, on the fourth day after the interment of Lieutenant Toms, one of Fitzgerald's messmates, descended into the store-room for the purpose of summoning him to his dinner, perceived him in a stooping attitude trailing something along the deck.

"What are you at there, Phelan?" said his messmate, "why don't you come up to dinner?"

"Dinner! It's the last dinner you or any other man in the ship will ever eat, unless you make the captain instantly come down here and beg my pardon for that infamous badge," pointing to his doffed jacket. "Do you see that auger, and that hole in the deck?" he added, with the glare of a maniac, "and do you see this candle, and that train? It leads to a hole in the magazine. I give you only three minutes. If the captain does not

come to his senses in that time, up you all go, by the living God!"

Jones was panic-stricken by this terrible announcement, and, gasping out, "Stop, Fitzgerald, I'll fetch the captain down immediately!" flew up to the quarter-deck, where Mr. Gordon, the gunner, and Giles were engaged in conversation.

"Mr. Giles, Mr. Giles!" he exclaimed in a frantic tone, "we shall be all blown up in a couple of minutes, unless the captain goes instantly down to the gunner's store-room."

"What's the man talking about, Mr. Gordon?" said Giles, as if the gunner could tell.

"There's Fitzgerald below, sir, in the store-room, as mad as a March-hare," replied Jones, "holding a naked light in his hand, and with a train of powder at his feet leading to the magazine, swearing he will blow up the ship if the captain does n't go below and ask his pardon for branding him as a thief. There's not a moment to be lost. Run, sir, run for the captain, and save the ship and all hands!"

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Giles, "the captain is ashore! What's to be done, Mr. Gordon?"

The gunner, who was a cool and resolute man, said, "Leave it to me, sir, I can imitate the captain's method of speaking, and with a wet swab I'll do the rest." And he immediately disappeared on his perilous mission.

But, instead of imitating the presence of mind of the gunner, Giles was as completely scared as the terrified messenger who brought the fearful tidings. Both gave way to frantic exclamations, and, running along the lower deck, spread the contagion of fear, causing the ship's company to crowd the several ladders leading on deck.

Meanwhile the gunner descended the fore cock-pit. The store-room door was closed. Gordon knocked at it, and, imitating the captain's peculiar pronunciation, cried, "Opel the door."

"Who's there?" inquired Fitzgerald from within.

"The captain."

The door burst back, and Fitzgerald rushed out with a pistol in his hand, shot the gunner through the heart before his frenzied haste permitted him to discern the sea-

tures of his victim, which the dim light of the cock-pit rendered more obscure.

The report of the pistol spread wild consternation throughout the crew, many of whom, in the insanity of their panic, imagining that the first explosion had taken place, jumped overboard out of the lower-deck ports, while those who could not swim took to the boats alongside.

The greater part of the midshipmen shared in the general terror; but Darcy, who felt that nothing was to be gained by the inactivity of despair, rushed down to the fore cock-pit, whence had issued the report of the pistol. Here the first object that met his sight was the gunner stretched bleeding upon the deck. Fitzgerald was bending over the body, holding his candle to the features of the dead man.

With the greatest presence of mind, Darcy instantly threw himself upon the light so as effectually to extinguish it, and then, with equal rapidity, seized Fitzgerald by the collar and dragged him to the foot of the ladder. Here he was soon joined by the mate of the lower-deck, and the culprit was finally secured and consigned to the custody of the master-at-arms.

Whilst Darcy, by his presence of mind and intrepidity, had saved the ship, (for Fitzgerald, who, at the moment of the midshipman's arrival, had discovered he had shot the wrong man, would doubtless have returned to the store-room and executed his demoniacal plan,) the officers on deck were loudly hailing the men overboard, as they were swimming away in the direction of the two prizes.

Such was the noise and confusion that Leatherlungs was aroused from the cot in his cabin, and, throwing on his dressing gown, he ascended the quarter-deck, his head still bandaged, when, perceiving the unaccountable state of things, and concluding the ship was on fire, he called out to the corporal of marines.

"Corporal, you can beat the drum. Beat instantly to quarters."

This had, in some degree, the effect of restoring order. Fitzgerald, being secured in irons, was soon found to be a confirmed maniac, and was accordingly sent to the hospital at Gibraltar, where, in a few days, he died, uttering the most horrid imprecations against his fancied oppressor, the captain.

The wretched man had hardly been two days under ground before one of his messmates, coming aft on the quarter-deck, produced the two-pound note, which had been placed, by some unknown hand, in the corner of one of the shelves where the mess-plates of the berth were usually deposited. A mystery hung over the whole transaction.\*

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## CHAPTER XXI.

"A ship in sight! with joy the tars make sail,  
And spread the bellying canvass to the gale."

DR. MOORE.

ELEVEN days elapsed ere the damage which the *Non-such* had sustained from the fire of the enemy's gun-boats was sufficiently repaired to render the ship ready for sea-service. Meanwhile, the senior officer off Cadiz, who had purposely put into Gibraltar to replace a sprung lower-yard, had taken upon himself to fill up the vacancies which had occurred in His Majesty's ship, by the lamented death of the gallant Toms, and the joyous departure of the "condemned" Doctor, who had been already "invalided home as an incurable subject." The mate of the hold was released from his low and drudging duties between "wind and water." He had now to face the light of day—to look aloft—to wear a trumpet under his arm, and to strut in well brushed attire the weather-side of the quarter-deck, as officer of the watch. In short, Mr. Leagur's gallantry in the launch had obtained for him "an acting order" as lieutenant of the ship; whilst the professional skill displayed by Smith, particularly in the case of *Leatherlungs*, had procured for the assistant a similar appointment to act as surgeon.

Pursuant to Sir Montague's "Admiralty orders" to cruise for six weeks off the Western Islands after the governor had been landed at Gibraltar, the ship proceeded to sea.

The Little Liner "left Gib," as Darcy termed it, "with

\* The main circumstances of this chapter are founded in fact.

a light Levanter," which carried her some seventy miles in her course, when the easterly breeze, breathing its last, was succeeded by a strong sou'-westerly wind.

The ship was now under close-reefed topsails and fore-sail, standing to westward on the larboard tack. The topgallant yards had been sent down on deck; when about six in the evening, breaking through a dark passing squall, a strange sail was descried, "a point upon the weather bow."

The stranger's "bearing" being reported to the baronet, the main-sail was directed to be set, and another reef to be "let out" of the main-topsail. The Nonsuch was not long in "rising the stranger's hull," which was no sooner discernible from the deck, than she was suddenly seen to alter her course.

"That fellow 's a rogue," said Darcy, addressing the officer of the watch, who was now forward on the fore-castle. "I'll swear, Mr. Muddle," added the quick-sighted mid, "the brig was going large, and steering to the north-east, when I looked at her last."

"She's now close-hauled, and on the larboard tack," returned the master, looking at the stranger through his glass over the breast-hammocks on the fore-castle. "Darcy," added he, "down, and tell Mr. Leatherlungs. Let's see what he'll make of her."

The first lieutenant returned with Darcy upon deck.

"Well, Muddle, what do you make of this craft; a Scotch prize, I suppose?"

"I don't know. Her sails look like English canvass; but I can't understand her altering her course."

"I tell you what it is, master," rejoined Leatherlungs, "She's a West Indianman homeward bound. She's parted her convoy. Her skipper's afraid of getting his hands pressed; and he means to diddle us in the dark. There's no moon, you know, to-night."

"Well, at all events," said the master, "we're overhauling him fast. It looks, however, very greasy to wind-ward. Fear we shan't be able to board him."

The ship's company had been at supper on the lower deck, and the baronet having risen from his *siesta* in the cabin, now appeared upon the quarter-deck.

"Mr. Muddle," cried Sir Montague, addressing the officer of the watch, "as soon as the people have had their time, haul the courses up. I don't see the use of straitl' the

ship il a useless chase. Aly wol cal see with half al eye that that's a British brig."

"It may be as well, sir," said Leatherlungs, "now that we're coming up with her hand over hand, to pass within hail and speak her."

"Well thel, keep fast the courses, Mr. Muddle. Hoist the elsigl: she'll sool show her colours whel she sees ours."

"There goes the English ensign," said Darcy, who had had his eye steadily fixed upon the chase. "Just as Mr. Leatherlungs said," he added, running aft from the fore-castle to report the colours exhibited by the brig.

The sun had already sunk "wild and watery in the west." The day was fast drawing to a close. From the wind having favoured the pursuer a couple of points, the chase was now brought within gun-shot, a little upon the lee-bow.

"Mr. Muddle," cried the baronet, "fire a gul at the chase to bril her to."

"Ay, ay, sir." Mr. Lewis hailed the officer of the watch, "clear away the bow-chaser on the folksel."

It may be necessary to state, that Mr. Lewis had hardly been borne fifty hours upon the books of His Majesty's ship, having received an "acting warrant" at Gibraltar to supply the place of the deceased Gordon. Lewis, now *Mister*, by virtue of his temporary rank, had been gunner's mate of the admiral's ship.

The bow-chaser was already trained in the direction of the chase.

"Shall I fire low, sir?" asked the acting gunner, hailing from the fore-castle.

"Lo, sir, lo!" responded the baronet, in hurried accents.

"Heave up, bo," said Lewis, addressing the gunner's mate, who stood by the side of the gun, handspike in hand, to raise or depress the muzzle of the piece—"heave up, my son, the captain says, 'fire low.'"

The breech of the gun was accordingly raised, and the muzzle depressed, so as to bring the 'line of bore' on a level with the hull of the chase.

"All ready with the gun, sir," cried Lewis from the fore-castle.

"Dol't let him fire 'till I tell him. I walt to see where



he drops the shot," said Sir Montague, placing himself in the nook of the lee-waist hammock netting.

"Fire whel you're ready," hawled the baronet.

Bang went the bow-chaser.

"Curse the fellow, he's shot away the brig's mail-boom," exclaimed Sir Montague, scrutinising the vessel with his glass. "Mr. Leatherlungs, seld that stupid lubberly man aft. How the admiral cal put into *my* ship such a fellow callil himself a guller, is to me quite ulaccoutable."

Mr. Lewis now stood uncovered before the baronet.

"How dare you, sir, act il oppositiol to my order. Eh, sir?"

"I axes yer pardon, Sir Montague, but you told me to fire *low*, sir."

"I told you! Was there ever such effroltery? I distinctly said, sir, lo, lo. I'll take good care you shall never hold a colfirmid warralt. Mr. Leatherlungs, lever let this Mr. Lewis fire a gul agail. Away with you, sir; for two pils, I'd seld you to your cabil ulder al arrest."

The astonished gunner, retiring along the lee gangway, muttered to himself as he walked forward, "I'll take my bob on the book, he sung out *low*, and twice too,—that he did. But it's always the way, whensomever mischief comen by 'beying orders, the blame's sure to be thrown on *him* as can bear it least.

The Nonsuch had now approached the chase sufficiently near to shorten sail, preparatory to passing within hail.

Leatherlungs had taken the executive command. The trumpet was handed over to the first lieutenant, whilst the master proceeded to the poop to conn the ship abeam of the brig.

"Luff," ejaculated Muddle.

"Luff it is, sir," responded the quarter-master,

"Give her *more* helm, sir," rejoined Muddle, peevishly.

"She's *got* it, sir. There's never no fear of grazing her quarter," said Weatherley, who never permitted, if he could possibly help it, a commissioned officer to triumph in the last word.

The main yard had been backed, and the ship now brought-to on the weather beam of the brig.

"Brig, a hoy!" thundered forth the first lieutenant, through the trumpet. "Where are you from?"

"Jam mac."

"From where? Where did he say, master?" interrogated the hailer.

"Couldn't make out; mac was the fag end of the place."

"Where—are—you—bound—to," added Leatherlungs, hailing in the long syllabic mode, peculiar to seafaring folk, when blowing fresh.

"Lee-vare-pool," was the trumpeted response.

"What—are—you—laden—with?"

"Rome and shoo-gare."

"There's nothing English in that tongue. By the Immaculate Man! that fellow's a reg'lar rogue."

Leatherlungs had scarcely delivered his opinion ere a boy on board the brig was seen to hold up the log-board, on the back of which was exhibited a communication chalked in large characters.

"Look, sir!" said Darcy, gazing through his glass, and drawing the attention of the first lieutenant to the writing on the board, "look, sir; that boy abaft wants to hold a private parley. What's that?" continued he, spelling aloud the large letters chalked in capitals;—

P. R. I. Z. E—Prize! plain enough. T. O, A, P. R. I. V. A. T. E. E. R. "Prize to a privateer, sir," ejaculated the delighted youth, to the great glee of the numerous gazers, who had already lined the lee gangway.

"Very ulfortulate it blows so hard. Impossible to board her."

"*Pu* board her, sir," exclaimed Darcy, touching his hat to the captain, "if you'll only allow me to choose a cutter's crew."

"*You* will, will you?" returned the baronet. "Is this braggadocio, Mr. Leatherlungs, or is the youlg geltlemal il earlest?" added Sir Montague, in accents which were lost to the middy's ear.

"No braggadocio there, sir," responded the first lieutenant: "more of a *doer* than a talker."

"I *lō*" rejoined the baronet, "he's a pet midshipmal of yours; but still it wol' do to expose the lives of others, merely to exhibit Mr. Darcy's daril'."

"It wont do to lose a prize, sir, for want of boarding," was the pointed response.

"Well, thel, Mr. Leatherlungs," cried the baronet, who never turned a deaf ear to any observation which involved

pecuniary gain, "let Mr. Darcy select his crew; and tell him when he gets aboard to hoist a whet, if the brig be really a re-capture."

Darcy was not long in selecting seven volunteers to board the brig. His only difficulty was to refuse, without giving offence the many men who flocked under the half deck to tender an offer of service. From the throng of assembled volunteers, Darcy selected Weatherley, Potter, Long, Short, and three other similar dare-devils, to complete the cutter's crew.

Pursuant to the plan of the first lieutenant, Darcy and his dauntless volunteers were now lowered in the cutter from the davits on the lee quarter. The boat soon cleared the ship, and flying before the fast following sea, rapidly closed with the brig to leeward: but in running alongside of the stranger, the channels of the vessel, coming in collision with the cutter's side, stove her to pieces. With difficulty could the crew extricate themselves from the foundering boat, which soon disappeared under the quarter of the brig. The cutter's loss was still unknown to the people in the ship.

In a few minutes a whet was seen, to fly at the peak of the brig. In vain did Darcy endeavour to hail the ship, but his words were borne to leeward on the blast. Not a syllable reached the Little Liner. At length, adopting the plan of the lad who had tried his hand on the log-board, Darcy exhibited, in large letters, the following words:

*Re-capture—Seven Frenchmen—Cutter sunk.*

"I lew how 'twould be, Mr. Leatherluls, whenever I allow myself to be led away by the opiliol of others thil's *always* go wrol'. There low, you sec, we've lost the cutter."

"And gained a prize," interrupted the first lieutenant.

"Pray how are we to exchalge the prisolers?" inquired the baronet, dictatorially.

"They're man for man, sir," returned Leatherlungs; "and the crew that Mr. Darcy has selected could master ten Frenchmen."

"The wind's fair too, sir," interposed the master. "Mr. Darcy is one of the best navigators in the ship; he's quite competent to carry the brig into port. Reach Plymouth in no time with this staggering breeze."

"Well, could we olly malage to keep compaly to light till it moderates il the morlil', I should take the prisolers out ald seld Mr. Giles il charge as prize-master. I always make it a rule to seld a commissioled officer ol these oc-casiols."

The significant glances which were interchanged between the master and the first lieutenant, at the notion of nominating "Gentle Johnny" to take charge of any craft larger than a jolly-boat, appeared to call forth an observation from the baronet, which was thus answered by Leatherlungs,—

"Perfectly agree with Mr. Muddle, sir. Better let the brig bear up. We can hail Mr. Darcy, and desire him to secure his prisoners as well as he can, and then shape a course direct for Plymouth."

"You'd better ask him," said the master, "if he has a chart of the Channel aboard."

"Well, if he is to go, we'd better get clear of him before dark," said the baronet, withdrawing from the gangway, and retiring to his cabin.

The ship had been again edged away to close with the brig, in order that the hail of Leatherlungs, stentorian as it was, might be distinctly heard. The verbal instructions which were borne on the breeze soon reached Darcy's eager ear, and each anxious interrogation met with a satisfactory response by a telegraph wave of the hand.

"You may now bear up when you like," vociferated the first lieutenant, through his trumpet; and bear in mind, Mr. Darcy, you're man for man. Do you *understand*?"

Another waive from the hand of the delighted mid gave clear indication, that the emphatic words of the first lieutenant carried with them a clear and comprehensive warning.

Ere the shades of night had set in, the Little Liner's re-capture was seen, bowling before the gusty gale, and steering a steady course for Plymouth.

## CHAPTER XXII.

"Fair encounter  
Of two most rare affections ! Heavens reign grace  
On that which breeds between them."

THE TEMPEST.

It was now nine at night, when Darcy, after consulting with Weatherley touching the disposal of the prisoners, thought it time to ascertain the description of accommodation the cabin of the brig afforded.

"Weatherley," said he, addressing the quarter-master, who had already taken charge of the first watch, "tell Potter and the rest of the people to remain on deck, until I return from the cabin."

"I'm awake, sir. If Crappo weathers on 'Tom, Tom never knows nothin' o' natur. Pity, Mr. Darcy, we hav' n't the bilboes\* aboard; but a few handcuffs would just serve as well. P'rhaps, sir, you may find a few wristbands below in the cabin."

"Oh, no, old fellow: recollect prisoners are prisoners. It woud do to treat them altogether like galley slaves."

"Sartinly not, sir; but then you know, Mr. Darcy, Crappo's a chap as ye can never trust. He's for all the world like a cat, never can tame him. Fondle and feed him ever so well, still he's sure to spit at ye, and claw, and scratch ye in return."

During this short dialogue, Mons. Jean Jacques Le Roux, who felt not a little chagrined at being so unceremoniously superseded in the pleasurable and profitable post of prize-master to the good brig *Jane*, was disputing with his compatriots upon the folly of having followed their counsel in altering the course.

"Let them jabber away," said Darcy: "the more they quarrel amongst themselves, the less will they be disposed to brew mischief. So look out, old fellow: I shall not remain long below."

Descending the companion-ladder, Darcy soon opened

\* Irons in which prisoners are confined by the leg.

the cabin door. But how was he startled at the first object which caught his eyes!

"Bless my soul," said he retreating, "I really have to apologise for this intrusion; but I had not the least idea that ladies were on board," he added, addressing himself to an elegantly formed female, clad in a white robe, and bending over the "berth" of a helpless and debilitated lady, apparently advanced in years.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the astonished girl. "Are you an Englishman? Whence do you come? How came you here? Surely that's an English naval uniform," she continued, turning suddenly round, and endeavouring to disengage the lashed candlestick from the table, for the purpose of scrutinizing, with the pale light it put forth, Darcy's dripping attire.

"For this abrupt intrusion," continued the midshipman, "the only apology I can offer is, that the French prize-master had not informed me that the cabin was *so* possessed."

"Ah! that's like him," ejaculated the reclining sufferer, in feeble accents. "A ruder or coarser minded man never breathed. His vulgar and low-bred familiarities—"

Here the exhausted lady sunk back, unable to give further articulation to her words.

"Say no more, dear mamma. It distresses you to speak. And I'm sure that that rude libertine is unworthy of your thoughts. If poor papa," she added, pointing to her debilitated parent, "could have stirred from that berth, the ruffian dared not have offered——"

"No, my dear," interrupted the voice of an elderly gentleman, exhibiting, as he drew aside the curtains of his berth, the pallid features of one labouring under the helpless lassitude which always accompanies sea-sickness. "But, Emily, how is this," added the invalid, in accents scarcely audible, "are we still prisoners? or, are we released from that rascal?"

"You are again, sir, restored to liberty," said Darcy, advancing to the berth of the poor gentleman, and grasping him by the hand with energetic sympathy. "The brig, sir," he added, "has been re-captured by a British man of war; and, I'm happy to say, for your sake, is now under *my* charge."

"God is good!" ejaculated the suffering gentleman.

Mutual explanations, touching the relative position of each party, were now interchanged. Darcy's tale was soon told; whilst in return he learned, that the family in possession of the cabin had been kept in total ignorance relative to every particular connected not only with the chase, but the circumstance of re-capture. Pending the Nonsuch's pursuit of the Jane, the companion hatch had been closely secured, and all communication cut off between the cabin and the deck.

Darcy was further informed that the Jane was a British West Indiaman, homeward bound, having on board the family of Mr. Melton, an affluent Jamaica planter, who was proceeding to England for the restoration of his lady's health; that the brig had parted from her convoy in a dense fog, on the banks of Newfoundland; that Mrs. Melton's female domestic had unfortunately fallen overboard, whilst leaning over the lee rough-tree, on the fifth night succeeding their departure from Jamaica; that the Jane had been captured by a French privateer, and, until now, had been eleven days in possession of the enemy.

Miss Melton had thus far proceeded, when Darcy informed the cabin party, that their rescue from the hands of the enemy was chiefly attributable to the presence of mind of a Creole lad, who had chalked on the log-board the real state of things.

"And yet," said Mr. Melton, "I thought it so cruel and unkind of George not coming near me once the whole afternoon."

"Your valet tells me," said Darcy, "that he concealed himself in the cabouse until a few seconds before the Nonsuch had hailed the brig. Had he not done so, you might still have been prisoners of war."

It would seem that, upon her capture, the captain and crew of the Jane were all removed to the privateer, and that Mr. Melton and his family were alone allowed to remain in the brig.

Miss Melton had hardly completed the narration of her troubles, ere Monsieur le Roux unceremoniously entering the cabin, and drawing from his pocket a greasy pack of cards, thus accosted Darcy, with a familiar tap on the shoulder.

"Eh bien donc, Monsieur,—la fortune du guerre. *Soop-pose* ve play de cart. Allons, piquet ou écarté?"

"I'll picquet you, you ruffian, if you do not instantly fly upon deck. So, sir, you must be rude to ladies, eh? *You* call yourself a Frenchman?"

"Vat is dis—Vy so get up your cholere?"

"Collar! I'll collar *you* directly. Weatherly," hailed Darcy, "send Potter below."

"Oh! pray, sir," exclaimed Miss Melton, addressing the midshipman, "quarrel not with Monsieur Le Roux on our account. He can now no longer annoy us."

Darcy complied with the request of the young lady, but with the stipulation that Monsieur le Roux should be expelled the cabin.

Matters were now in a comfortable training. Darcy insisted upon Mr. Melton and his family occupying the entire of the cabin. But the pleasure of taking his meals with the family was solicited by him as a favour.

The wind remained fair for two nights and two days. The breeze had hardly borne the Jane beyond the latitude of *Bordeaux*, ere the brig 'running' under a crowd of canvass, was suddenly taken aback. Fortunately, the snapping of a few studden-sail booms was the only damage the vessel sustained.

"Bad business this, Mr. Darcy," exclaimed Weatherley, with a shake of the head. "If this is n't a reglar-built nine-lived nor' easter, Tom never knows nothin' of a breedin' breeze."

"Never mind, old fellow, we must make the best of it," returned Darcy; "though to be sure, beating a bluff-bow'd brig in the Bay of Biscay, is not the pleasantest pastime with *ladies* aboard."

The sincerity with which this remark was delivered, admitted of a very questionable interpretation. Darcy's only apprehension had been, that a fair wind would too soon deprive him of his 'fair freight.'

Although (as we have elsewhere observed) an adverse wind too frequently engenders unfriendly feeling afloat, yet, "when a lady's in the case," contrary breezes invariably produce contrary effects. The mathematical "saw" of "opposite sides, opposite angles," may be matched by the nautical notch of opposite sexes, opposite conduct. The feeling that subsists between "man and man," during the existence of a contrary wind, is the very reverse



of that which subsists between people of opposite sexes. So much of fear is to be allayed,—of hope held out,—of fancy indulged,—and of technical explanation poured into the uninitiated ear, that folk are often found to be on terms of the most endearing intimacy, before they are aware of the magnetic influence of nautical communion.

But Miss Melton was not a sufferer at sea. She suffered only from the constant confinement of a close cabin. It was, therefore, determined by her parents that now, no longer subject to the annoyances of the ruffian *Le Roux*, she should, as often as possible, inhale the purer air of the deck. This injunction delighted the ear of Darcy; for, like most sea-going young gentlemen of his years, Mr. Midshipman Darcy was very susceptible of the tender passion. Indeed, from the first moment he beheld the sylph-like figure of the fair Emily, bending over the berth, and replacing the pillow of her afflicted parent, he was struck by the symmetry of her exquisite form. Nor were the flashes of indignation, and the animated glances which lighted up her expressive features, when narrating her tale of trouble, unperceived by the admiring youth. Before the prize-master was six hours in possession of the *Jane*, Emily had captured the heart of Charles.

Indeed, in Darcy's eye, (to quote his own emphatic exclamation,) she was a "perfect Divinity." And *certainly* the personal charms and fascinating manners of Miss Melton would have made a conquest of even a colder and less amatory mid. But, beauty apart, there were other considerations which, in estimating her worth, rendered her doubly dear to Darcy. The young lady, as he himself had intimated to Weatherley, "not only had her sea-legs aboard, but was also willing and able to lend a helping hand" in any blue water work required.

Nine days of the "nine-lived north-easter" had already elapsed, during which period the weather was beautifully bright, and the sea comparatively smooth. Miss Melton was constantly on deck; and under the joint tuition of Darcy, Weatherley, and Co., the young lady had made unprecedented progress in nautical knowledge. The lessons of the naturalist were chiefly confined to distinctions upon "dog stoppers," "cats'-paws," "Spanish foxes," and "fish-falls;" whilst "Turks'-heads," "French-

faikes," and Flemish-eyes" underwent no little 'working' in a watch.

Nor had Darcy been idle in his daily instruction. Emily was soon made to understand the difference that existed between a "granny's" and a "true-lover's knot;" and, "in reefing a reefer's handkerchief," she was not long in acquiring the roundabout way. She had also been taught to "hold the glass," and cry "turn" in a nautical tone; and in heaving the log, the "stray-line" seldom led the young lady astray.

Nor was her tuition alone confined to "seamanship." From daily practice in "taking celestial observations," Darcy's pupil readily became an adept in the art,—the preceptor, during each lesson, confining *his* observations to the heavenly object standing by his side. The "Charmer," too, as styled by Weatherley, could "box her compass," and estimate with unerring precision the Jane's "lee-way," whilst weathering on Charles's wake.

Matters nautical and natural were proceeding at a pleasurable pace, when Weatherley, swallowing a "seven-beller," which had been handed up the companion-ladder by Emily, thus accosted the smitten mid :

"I'm blest, Mr. Darcy, if she isn't a nice un. A comelier and cleaner-built craft, *I* never seed : and Tom, too, 's seed a few in his time. What a beautiful swelling bow she's got. How grad'ally from the bends up, she tumbles home. Never seed better bearin's. Just in the right place. And what top-lights, too! Why, they fairly flashes fire, and flies through a fellow like red-hot shot. Then *what* a takin' tongue, and to feel the coaxin' tap of her tiny hand on a fellow's shoulder, as she axes ye 'what ye thinks o' the wind?' Ah! Mr. Darcy, I only wishes *I* was a young gemman."

"Would *I* were an older one," returned the "young gemman."

"Why, yer old enough. There can't be a matter of a month's difference atwixt ye, one way or tother——"

"Well, but suppose you *were* a young gentleman," interrupted the midddy, "what would you do?"

"Give her a bit o' my mind, to be sure," returned Weatherley, with a significant nudge of the elbow. "And moreover," continued the encomiast, "she's just the sort o' young lady as 'ud like a young fellow all the better for

not keepin' his thoughts to himself. There's natur in every tarn of her. Let her tread the deck, or look aloft, there you has her, natur and nothin' more. And, mind ye, young gemman, ye never seed a thing as natur liked to love, as didn't like to *love* natur."

Darcy would have given all he was worth in the world could Emily only have heard Weatherley's words; but the charmer had returned to the cabin ere the quarter-master had indulged his nat'ral vein.

The soft "sayings" and tender "doings" of the deck were not long lost to the wily Le Roux. His quick perception soon detected Darcy's devotion to Miss Melton. This was exactly what he wished. He perpetually sought, by fulsome inuendoes, touching what he was pleased to term Darcy's "*bonne fortune vid la belle brunette*," to ingratiate himself into the favour of the high-minded youth. But the Frenchman's flattery was not to Darcy's taste. Nor was Weatherley altogether pleased at remarks which were now made in his hearing.

"If Mr. Darcy," said he, "takes a friend's advice, he'll tarn ye over to Pleasant Paul. If *he* comes to give ye a nip, good by, Mr. Crappo, to the swallowin' o' frogs."

Le Roux was little disposed to swallow "the swallowin' of frogs." A war of words ensued: but, in the vernacular of the fore-castle, Weatherley maintained the "weather gage."

"Come, come, Mr. Crappo," exclaimed the quarter-master, "we've had quite enough of your pie-bald prate. You'd better dive below. Yer sour mug 's only a feeder to a foul wind. Yer never nothin' but a thund'rin' Jonas!"

"No, sare, I vos not de Jean-Ass; bote it vos *you*, sare, dat vos de veritable *Jean Bull*."

And, so saying, the discomfited Frenchman descended to the steerage, where he remained in sullen silence the rest of the day.

On the following morning, as Darcy and the Meltons were at breakfast (for both Mr. and Mrs. Melton had for the first time, since their release from the durance of Le Roux, appeared at table,) Weatherley, entering the cabin, exclaimed in joyous accents:

"*Here* we have it, sir. A sou'wester, at last. Now's

our time! Out reefs,—and crack on every thing low and aloft.”

“Bravo! old fellow,” responded Darcy, rubbing his hands in delight, “crack on her. Come, Mr. Melton, you must now lend a hand to razee this round of beef. A fair wind always creates an appetite. It’s a far better tonic than camomile tea.

Three thumps of a hand-spike had already summoned the people on deck. Dividing themselves, they flew aloft, and were now seen shaking out the reefs of the topsails, preparing to press sail. Long and Potter ascended forward, whilst Short and the two other topmen distributed themselves on the main top-sail yard. Weatherley alone was left upon the deck, and took the helm in hand.

The English crew had been hardly five minutes aloft, ere Darcy, still at breakfast in the cabin, heard overhead a scuffle upon deck. Running and peeping up the companion hatch, his eye was seared by a sight he was little prepared to expect. Weatherley, apparently lifeless, lay at the extremity of the tiller, stretched on the deck, whilst his place at the helm was supplied by a ferocious looking Frenchman. Le Roux stood on the weather side of the deck, with a pistol in each hand pointed aloft. Darcy soon saw the state of things. Returning to the cabin, with the rapidity of thought he grasped from the hand of Mr. Melton the carving knife, which the feeble gentleman had just put into requisition.

“Good heaven!” exclaimed Emily, seizing Darcy by the arm, “what’s the matter?”

“Detain me not. Our safety’s at stake.”

“Dear Mr. Darcy, do say what *is* the matter,” ejaculated the alarmed mother, aiding the daughter in her hold of the midshipman’s arm.

“Let me loose, I beseech you. We are lost, if you detain me another second. Le Roux and his rascals have already risen,” added the midshipman, extricating himself from the ladies’ grasp.

Flying up the ladder, Darcy had hardly cleared the companion hatch, ere Le Roux, firing a pistol, sent the ball grazing the crown of his head. Little daunted, he flew forward to grapple his assailant. The Frenchman snapped his second pistol full in the midshipman’s face. Darcy, however, succeeded in closing and collaring his

tall antagonist; but the knife had fallen from his hand; and in the struggle, the superior strength of Le Roux prevailed. The midshipman fell under the Frenchman, who now kept the youth down upon the deck, with his knee pressed upon his chest.

At this moment, Emily Melton, who stood unseen on the companion-ladder, trembling for Darcy's fate, suddenly descended the cabin, and, without awaiting to exchange words with her parents, seized the tea-kettle, poured into a basin the boiling water, ran on deck, and, before the Frenchman had time to perceive her approach, flung the scalding liquid full into his eyes.

Darcy's opponent fell back in agonizing torture, whilst Miss Melton dropped on the deck, from the effect of a marling-spike, which had been hurled at her head by the ruffian who still retained his hold of the helm. The mischievous missile had hardly taken effect, ere Short, sliding down the main top-mast back-stay, rushed aft to grapple with the steersman.

"Oh, you infernal, white-livered, cowardly beggar!" he exclaimed, flying at the Frenchman like a tiger, and seizing him by the bare throat with both hands. "See what you've *done*, you murderin' monster! But you shall never again hurt the hair of woman's head," he added, strangling the helmsman in his herculean grasp, leaving the dastard dead upon the deck, and running to raise the senseless girl, while his companion aloft, arriving at the scene of action, took the tiller in hand.

"God bless her! the blood 's fairly left her cheek. Mr. Darcy! Mr. Darcy!" called Short, who had not been aware that the youth had been compelled to run forward to the aid of Long and Potter, who were in furious combat on the fore-castle, opposed to four powerful Frenchmen.

"Is there never no one as can run and get a glass of grog for the young lady? Here, you George," cried Short, perceiving the Creole lad peeping up the companion ladder; "bear a fist, boy. Bring your young missus up a drop o' summut to bring her to life."

Short's mandate was immediately obeyed. Meanwhile, he placed Miss Melton in a position in which he could *more readily* fan her with his hat.

"*Do*, young lady, open yer eyes, and give comfort to

a fellow. Oh! what a beggar, to harm such a beautiful creature. Talk o' Bet Bowles! D—n it, she can't hold a candle to she. Do, Miss, do open your precious peepers. God bless her—look, she always does as a fellow tells her."

At this moment, Emily showing symptoms of returning life, opened her eyes like one awaking from a dream:

"Where am I? Where am I? Is Mr. Darcy safe?" she faintly uttered, dropping her head upon the shoulder of the tarry topman.

"All right, miss. Here he comes. Here's a sight as 'ill do your heart good."

The sight was indeed one calculated to cheer the heart. Potter and long at this moment were bringing aft by the nape of the neck their two most powerful opponents; having, as Paul phrased it, left the t'other two cripples to fish their sprung spars on the folksel.

Emily's position had no sooner caught the eye of Darcy than he flew to her aid. The youth's feelings were quite overpowered at the sight of the faint, gasping, and, as he thought, dying girl. The danger he had undergone—the unequal struggle he had personally maintained—the loss which he supposed he had suffered by the apparent death of Weatherley—all gave way to the terror inspired by that one image,—Miss Melton severely wounded. She had again relapsed into an unconscious state; and, as Darcy gazed on her, he could no longer master his emotion, and burst into a flood of tears.

At length she again lifted her head from the shoulder of the seaman who supported her, and, unclosing her eyes, their glance fell on Darcy, who exclaimed,

"She lives! She lives! Speak, dear Miss Melton. Speak! let me hear a word or two from your own lips, and my heart of hearts shall bless you. Speak, speak, for heaven's sake!"

"I'm better, now," she replied, extending her hand to Darcy, who seized and pressed it with fond emotion. The pressure was gently returned by Emily, as she added, "but I still feel very faint. I was stunned by the blow, and my head suffers dreadfully. The missile was well aimed."

"Cowardly villain!" exclaimed Darcy, "he has met

his due reward. But this is not a place for *you*," he continued, addressing Emily. "Let me bear you below."

"No, no," responded Miss Melton; "suffer me to remain where I am. They will not frighten me any more now; for I feel that you will not leave me. The air of the deck, too, is reviving; and I would not for worlds, let my parents see me thus. I shall soon be more fit to meet them."

Darcy could not find words to express his emotions. His thoughts were evidenced by the adoration beaming in his looks.

At this juncture, Weatherley, who had to all appearance shared the fate of him who had wrested the helm from his hand, was seen to raise his head from the deck.

"Look, Mr. Darcy," exclaimed Short, pointing aft to the moving man. "Look, sir, Natur's got hold o' Tom again. All right now. Wrap full, old fellow. Thyst an' no higher."

Meantime measures touching the custody of the prisoners had been already discussed. Sundry schemes were devised to prevent their rising again; but in the practicability of each, a vast difference of opinion prevailed. Potter differed from Weatherley, Weatherley with Short, and Darcy with all. At length, the inventive genius of "Long-headed Bob" supplied a plan which was at once adopted.

With the exception of Le Roux, who, by the presence of mind of Miss Melton, had been already rendered *hors de combat*, and who had been borne below to his hammock in the steerage, the five remaining prisoners were secured after the following fashion. The arms of each man were first pinioned behind his back, then he was led to the waist, seated on the deck, and both his legs were securely lashed to the chain cable\* attached to the anchor, which was suspended to the starboard bow of the brig.

At the desire of Darcy, in whose character clemency was a prominent feature, the arms of the prisoners were to be released at stated intervals, for the purpose of permitting them to take their meals. All, however, were *given* to understand, that the slightest indication to riot,

\* At this period the chain cable was in its infancy.

or attempt to release their persons, would be instantly followed by dropping the anchor from the brig's bow. The effect of this nautical "new drop" needed no explanation. It was sufficiently obvious. The fettered Frenchmen all saw, that the anchor suddenly "let go" would cause the chain cable to run rapidly through the hause; that it would as rapidly carry, and drag with it their persons along the deck; when it would lacerate and dislocate their limbs, if not eventually end in violent death.

Purposely to awe the prisoners, one of the watch was placed forward on the forecastle, with an axe in his hand, ready at a moment's warning to cut the "stoppers" by which the anchor was suspended to the vessel's bow.

But Darcy's difficulties had yet to commence. The third hour of the "middle watch" had been hardly completed—the burial service read over the body of the deceased, and his remains decently committed to the deep (for Darcy warred not with the dead) ere the Jane, to use Weatherley's words, "tumbled right into the teeth of a French privateer."

At was a dark and starless morn. Lowering clouds hung in the heavens. The horizon to leeward was obscured by a dense interminable bank, black as Erebus. A fresh breeze was blowing from the S. W., of which Darcy was determined to make the most, as, steering a steady course, he pushed his devoted bark under a crowd of canvass 'low and aloft.

Dodging leisurely to leeward under low sail, and hidden from view by her favourable position, the cruiser descried the British brig long before the former became discernible to Darcy's crew. Like a cat watching a mouse, the privateer, with her main-topsail to the mast, remained stationary, until the Jane had approached sufficiently near to permit the wily Frenchman to carry his purpose into full effect.

A volley of musketry was now discharged at the Jane; but Darcy, undaunted, steadily pursued his course. The cruiser, a long, low, sneaking-looking black brig, with raking masts unusually taunt, now "filled," and bore up, steering, within pistol shot, a course parallel to that of the British brig. The enemy followed up a fierce fusil-



*lade.* The "weather-boards" of the West Indiaman were completely riddled, and her lower masts were already studded with musket balls.

"Keep close down, boys," cried Darcy, cheering up his gallant crew, for the watch below had already jumped upon deck, "and if you love me, Potter," he added, addressing the helmsman, "steer small."

"Leave Paul alone for that. 'Twill take more, Mr. Darcy, nor buzzin' bullets, to make, *me* yaw an inch from my course."

At this juncture, the tacks and sheets pertaining to the two-top-gallant-sails, lower and fore-topmast-studdin'-sails, were shot away, causing the unrestrained canvass to fly wildly, and flap furiously in the wind.

"There, too, goes the main-taupsc-tye," ejaculated Long, whose watching eyes were turned aloft, as he lay prostrate on the deck, under cover of a cotton bag, stowed upon the brig's quarter. "I'm blest," he continued, "if the beggars wont reg'larly unreeve ev'ry runnin' rope in the craft."

"Let them. *They* may shorten sail if they will. But *we*," said Darcy, in a determined tone, "shall not start a single stitch."

"That's *you*, Mr. Darcy," exclaimed Potter, at the helm. "That's a reg'lar-built bit o' Bawlin' Bill."

The day had already dawned. The privateer had brought a couple of carronades to bear upon the Jane. Grape and canister had now cut away two of her after-swifters. Still Darcy "held his own." But for the trembling tenants of the cabin he felt much; nor could he at such time desert the deck, or quit his post, even to allay the fears of the ladies below.

But further flight was now hopeless. A round shot entering the Jane's starboard quarter, severed the tiller in Potter's hand, and the brig instantly brouched to.

"It's all up, Mr. Darcy," cried Potter.

"Done for at last," echoed Weatherley.

"Mortal man could n't do more," ejaculated Long.

"Would n't mind it," said Short, "if it war n't for the young lady below. Come, Mr. Darcy," he continued, "*we'll* take the canvass off her. The beggars have stopp'd firing. Go, sir, down to the cabin. Ease it off *handsomely*, you know. No one can break it better."

"Break! It will break her heart," said Darcy, whilst his own was ready to burst. Descending the cabin, he soon acquainted his friends with the disastrous event. The feelings of the Meltons are not to be described.

The privateer's boat soon boarded the brig. The cruiser proved to be *L'Entreprenant*, pertaining to L'Orient. She had made many captures; and as she was already replete with prisoners, the British mode of securing the enemy was now in return practised upon the "Little Liners."

Poor Darcy! The sight of English seamen locked by the leg was not to be borne. He therefore prayed to be confined below. His prayer was heard."

In seven-and-thirty hours from parting company with the privateer, the British brig\* was seen securely moored in the port of L'Orient. Here Le Roux, appearing upon deck with a bandage round his eyes, declaimed, with all a Frenchman's ingenuity, upon the perfidious and cruel treatment he had experienced at the hands of the English. Miss Melton was represented as an amazon!—a fiend!—a female brigand! (as if brigands would practise their calling afloat.) Darcy was stigmatised as a butcher, a charlatan, and a *miserable mauvais sujet*. The crew were designated as murderers, particularly Short, who had slain the steersman.

These representations to the officer of the port were not without their due effect.



**LAND SHARKS**

**AND**

**SEA GULLS.**

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**BOOK IV.**

**THE DISCOVERY.**

He who hath never warr'd with misery,  
Nor ever tugg'd with fortune and distress,  
Hath had no occasion, nor no field to try  
The strength and forces of his worthiness,  
Those parts of judgment which felicity  
Keeps as concealed, affliction must express;  
And only men show their abilities,  
And what they are, in their extremities;  
For all the fair examples of renown,  
Out of distress and misery are grown.

DANIEL.

## BOOK IV.

### THE DISCOVERY.

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#### CHAPTER I.

"Nothing is Misery,  
Unless our weakness apprehend it so:  
We cannot be more faithful to ourselves  
In any thing that 's manly, than to make  
Ill fortune as contemptible to us  
As it makes us to others."

BRAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

HAVING been taken before the commandant of the town, and subjected to numerous close, and, as the Meltons conceived, impertinent interrogations, the whole party, as prisoners of war, even including the ladies, were condemned to be escorted by a military guard to the dépôt at Valenciennes. The men were formed in rank and file with other prisoners, previously captured, while Mrs. Melton and her daughter were permitted to hire a private vehicle, in the front and back of which sate a huge grenadier, by way of countervailing force to the two English ladies, for Miss Emily's gallant exploit on board the *Jane* was not forgotten by the *soi-disant* advocates of *l'hommage aux dames*. The voiture was ordered to keep in rear of the party on foot, and, in this manner, notice having been given, that the first man who should dare to wander from the ranks would be instantly shot, the captives commenced their unhappy march.

They were about three weeks on the road, enduring wretched privations in one place, a little lenity in another, and ingenious torment and insolence in a third. The

voluntage of "pleasant Paul" afforded matter of thought to the Frenchman, while the unperturbable good nature of Weatherbury, the naturalist, at once surprised and provoked them. Mr. Weston cast many a "longing, regretting look behind," at the nature, containing his wife and daughter, who shed tears at their inability to achieve the distance of the good man, as he lingered conversely with weedy bushes and blasted trees. As for Harry, his youth and exuberance kept him busied up, but his discontent was thoughtful; for, though he could not satisfactorily account for it, his dream in the house of Jolly Tom perpetually haunted his mind. He could not help imagining it to be, in some manner or other connected with his fate, and to prefigure his captivity in France.

One afternoon, just as the sun was dipping behind a hill, (being the close of the fifth day of their harassing march,) Weatherbury, turning to Potter, said,

"Look here, Paul; if we'd Mr. Muddle with us, now, he'd be using for an azimuth compass, to take an accurate plumb. And I'm blest if he wouldn't be right enough; for I'm certain, those juddering chaps never knew nothing of the right variation."

"Course the variation," returned Potter, smiling.

"You may growl, Paul; but you'd growl far more, if you'd to put the foot thirty or forty miles further, from here, for too much of an easterly course. If ye think as these here thund'rin' Johnny Harmaners knows the true bearing of the place, there's bound for 't. Bless the lot!"

"They'll find the place," repeated Potter, "whether we eate a feller's fat. My trouper's are badly guided. The side of my stomach's head is blasted from some a-carrying."

"Never mind, Paul, as you doesn't get another touch of the bugle. You haven't got the present now to patch you up."

Weatherbury's observations as to their route, was not so ill timed as it might at first sight appear, inasmuch as the desert had kept out of the direct course, in order to avoid Paris.

Evening was now fast approaching, when, as the party had just passed through a small town lying in their route, they were met by a body of the national guard, who were carrying five English prisoners from Moulins to

Valenciennes. These men, having escaped on the road, and being retaken, were now handcuffed, a degradation which excited, in no small degree, the wrath of Potter and of his ship-mate Long.

"Dash my wig! can you stand that, Bob?" ejaculated Paul, darting from the ranks, and rushing towards the shackled seamen, with the vain endeavour of releasing them from their manacles. "Do the beggars think," added Potter, "to treat their betters like a parcel o' Guinea niggers?"

This movement aroused no little anger among the French guards, who, not being able, in such a confused mass, to carry into effect the order of the commandant, namely, to shoot whoever might leave the ranks, began with the butt-end of their muskets to belabour Paul about the head. The blows he received would have stunned one whose skull was less thick than that of our pleasant friend; but they seemed to have no other effect on him than to stimulate him to action. He was now in his proper element, and, regardless (or perhaps ignorant) of consequences, he turned upon the soldier nearest to him, and seizing his musket, soon wrenched it from the Frenchman's grasp, crying out,

"Now's your time, Mr. Darcy: now, or never. Here's Bob, an' Slashin' Sam, an' all the rest on us ready to come Traffygar over the jabberin' frog-eatin' fry."

"*Sacre! vilain!*" exclaimed the French officer, cutting at Paul with his sabre, which the latter parried with the musket which he wielded not only in defence, but as a trophy.

"Speak English, you beggar!" said Paul. "Who do you think is to understand your outlandish gab? If you can't fight like a man, try and talk like a man."

The *mêlée* now became hotter and hotter, and more and more confused. Blood was flowing from more than one head on either side. Mr. Melton was aghast, seeing the great disparity between the captives and their escort; the ladies in the voiture (now left to themselves, for their *body guard* had dismounted from the vehicle to join in the fray) were screaming at the top of their voices, and loss of life must have ensued, had not Darcy commanded Potter to desist.

"*I desire,*" said he, "that you instantly surrender that



musket. You know not what mischief your rashness may bring upon us all."

"Come, come, Paul," exclaimed Weatherley, supporting the superior authority, "do as the young gemman bids ye. Mr. Darcy's right enough. Can't kick up a breeze, an' the whole of the country agen us. 'T isn't in natur. Give 'em back the musket—let 'em have it. We'll catch 'm in bluewater yet."

Long and Potter were now separated from their friends, and, having been handcuffed, were joined to the Rochelle *Incorrigibles*.

At length the party of captives, to whom the prospect of a prison was delightful, in comparison with the toil of a long march in an enemy's country, reached Valenciennes. In a jail they would, at least be able to rest their jaded limbs; and it was, therefore, with feelings allied to pleasure, that they entered the gloomy walls of the citadel. The foremast men, and other captives of their class, were consigned to the barracks situated in the north wing; while a small and miserable house, divided into six rooms, with three or four beds in each, was appropriated to Darcy and other midshipmen, previously taken prisoners, who were denominated *tres mauvais sujets*: a category under which Darcy had been especially brought, by his determined conduct in repressing the attempt of the French prize-master to regain his capture.

So great, indeed, was the dread inspired by these dare-devil midships, that, on their arrival, the sentinels were doubled, and the strictest vigilance enjoined.

As Mr. Melton was a civilian, he was allowed to be at large in the town, on his parole with his wife and daughter.

On their arrival at Valenciennes, the now captives were eagerly surrounded by those who had been for some time in confinement, and who were greedy, in proportion to the length of their captivity, to learn the latest news from their native land. Amongst these was an elderly gentleman of the name of Devon, who seemed to be more than usually interested by the countenance of the midshipman of the Nonsuch. So much, indeed, was he struck by this, that he lost no time in ascertaining his name, which he had no sooner learned, than his emotion, already great, became irrepressible.

On the second morning of his arrival at Valenciennes, as the young officer was pacing moodily in what was termed *the play-ground* of the citadel, Mr. Devon approached him, saying, "Your name, I understand, sir, is Darcy."

"It is, sir," replied the youth.

"May I venture on a liberty," rejoined Mr. Devon, in a faltering voice, "which I own seems unwarrantable in a stranger such as I am, to inquire where your father lives; for I have relations of your name."

"Alas!" returned Darcy, "my father has been dead many years."

"How near I was to happiness!" ejaculated Mr. Devon. "Your face, young man, aroused in me hopes which made my heart too large for my bosom. What you have said has restored me to my miserable self."

Darcy stared.

"But pray tell me to what part of England your family belongs."

"My father was an Irishman," rejoined Darcy.

"From what part of the island?"

"I never learned."

"Where did he die?"

"Alas! he was assassinated."

"What was the murderer's motive?"

"Your questions," returned the youth, "are somewhat frank and abrupt; but I will answer them frankly. I believe that my mother is acquainted with the cause of the atrocity, but it was never divulged to me. And now, sir, that I have replied to all your queries, may I in return beg to know why I am honoured with your curiosity?"

"I cannot answer you in this public yard. Strictly confined, as I understand you are, to the citadel, I may not ask you to my house in the town; for though, like yourself, a captive, I am suffered to be on my parole, under certain limitations. But you can no doubt obtain the use of a room for a short time, and grant me an interview."

An apartment which Darcy occupied with some other midshipmen, was soon cleared, and left exclusively to Mr. Devon and the youth.

"Your age—your name," resumed Mr. Devon, "above all, your face, which showed me, as in a glass, the sea-

tures of one more loved than aught the world contains, prompted the inquiries I have made. Your father's fate, though I know him not, has robbed me of the only happy thought which for years has arisen in my sad heart. My wife! my dear wife! what can have befallen thee and thy child?" continued Mr. Devon, drawing a miniature from his bosom, and kissing it fervently.

"Captivity, Mr. Devon," said Darcy, "has its privileges. Already I feel as if I had been long acquainted with you. Do not, therefore, refuse to show me the portrait which excites in you so strong an emotion."

Mr. Devon placed the miniature in the hands of the young man, who no sooner glanced at it than he exclaimed, "Good God! how like my mother!"

"My boy! my boy!" gasped Mr. Devon, stretching out his arms; but before he could fold the youth in his embrace, he fell back in a senseless state.

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## CHAPTER II.

"Sound moves a sound, voice doth beget a voice,  
One echo makes another to rejoice;  
One well-tuned string, set truly to the like,  
Struck near at hand, doth make another strike."

DRAYTON.

It was some time before the sufferer could be restored to consciousness; and this was no sooner effected, than he burst into violent sobs, clasped the youth in his arms, and again ejaculated, "My boy! my boy!"

Darcy allowed the passion of the stranger to work its own way. He felt convinced that Mr. Devon was under a thorough delusion. How could he be his son? Darcy's father had been murdered almost before the eyes of the youth's mother. She had lived some time as a widow—had married again—the gentleman who now claimed the young man as his son bore the name of Devon, not Darcy. These facts forbade any other suspicion than that the stranger was not in his right mind.

Yet, on the other hand, how was Mr. Devon's emotion, on beholding the features of the midshipman, to be accounted for? And, above all, how could a stranger have

become possessed of a portrait of Darcy's mother! For, although the picture represented a comparatively young face, the lineaments were so exactly those of Mrs. Waddy—the peculiar expression of the countenance was so strikingly true—the eyes, the mouth, the contour of the chin, the colour of the hair, even the mole on the left cheek, were so identical, that Darcy could not entertain the least doubt as to the original of the portrait.

These latter considerations, however, weighed but little with the midshipman. Had, indeed, any uncertainty existed as to the fate of his father, he might have felt perplexed at the present claim of paternity, though made by one bearing a different name from his own. But of the death of his parent there could be no doubt; and the young man, therefore, remained rather a cold spectator of Mr. Devon's agitation and transport.

At length, however, the stranger recovered something of composure, and said, "I do not wonder, Mr. Darcy, that the words which have escaped me in my ecstasy should have excited in you no other feeling than that of incredulity. What you have stated as to the assassination of your father, opposed to your instant recognition of the miniature, I must own bewilders me in the extreme. The mystery must be solved. You tell me," continued Mr. Devon, "it was reported that your father was murdered!"

"Reported!" echoed Darcy; "we are but too certain of the fact, which occurred almost in my mother's presence."

The positive tone assumed by the speaker in making this declaration, sounded to the elder captive like the voice of fate; yet he would not altogether abandon hope. Every thing conspired to favour his first belief, except this one idea of the murder of the young man's father, which, if it could be borne out, must of course establish the conviction that, notwithstanding the evidence of the miniature and the name and features of the youth, he must belong to a family in no way connected with that assigned to him by his companion.

"What you state, Mr. Darcy," said Mr. Devon, "is indeed most extraordinary. May I inquire where the melancholy event you speak of occurred?"

"Near London."

"The place?"

"Willesden."

"How long ago?"

"When I was a child."

"Enough, enough! A light breaks in upon me," joyfully exclaimed Mr. Devon. "I tell you your father lives, and is now before you. How inscrutable are the ways of providence! Poor O'Regan! To escape myself, I sent thee to thy death! What became of the assassin?"

"He fled."

"Before I commence the explanation which it is necessary I should give you," said Mr. Devon, "let me ask —"

But this words he meant to utter died on his lips. His resolution failed him. He was about to put a question, on the answer to which depended his all of earthly happiness. At length, after a pause, and while his features grew deadly pale, he gasped out,—

"Is your mother alive?"

"She is."

"Receive my thanks, merciful heaven!" exclaimed the stranger, burying his face in his hands.

Being in a short time recovered from this fresh agitation, Mr. Devon said, "Listen to me, my dear son; for so you will permit me to call you, when you shall have heard my story."

"I am breathless with attention," said Darcy.

"It is now about fourteen years ago since I last beheld my dear wife. I left her with her child, one morning, at an old house we had taken in the village of Willesden, that I might meet some political friends in London, promising to return early in the night."

"This," said the youth, "agrees exactly with what has been often told me by my mother. But your name is Devon."

"No, no; that is an assumed designation. My real name is Darcy."

"Go on, go on!" exclaimed the youth, betraying, in his turn, an agitation almost equal to that which had so strongly visited his companion.

"O, what a blessed moment is this!" ejaculated the

elder Darcy (for so we must now call him,) while he convulsively grasped the hand of his son.

A pause ensued. It would be vain, indeed, to attempt any description of the feelings of either party during that sacred silence.

The first that spoke was the elder Darcy, who said, "You must not, my dear boy, notwithstanding the uniform you wear, think the worse of your father, because he loved his native land, and combined with others against its oppressors."

"What mean you?"

"Your mother, you have already said, has told you your father was an Irishman?"

"Often."

"My country has long laboured under misrule, in the hope of remedying which, an association was formed many years ago, called 'Patriots of Erin.' In this society, I enrolled myself, and became an active member; so active, indeed, and so conspicuous (for believing my cause to be an honourable one, I needlessly exposed myself,) that I drew the eyes of the authorities on me. I have told you that I promised my wife to return early in the evening of the day when I last saw her. You shall now know what prevented me.

"The meeting, at which I had spoken energetically, was no sooner ended, and I was about to depart, than a countryman of mine, one O'Regan, came up to me in breathless haste, and acquainted me that a warrant was issued for my apprehension on a charge of high treason. I was unconscious of moral guilt; but I well knew the consequences in which such an accusation would at that time, involve a man. I trembled for my wife and helpless child. What was to be done? My very life was at stake.

"In this emergency, the ready tact of poor O'Regan saved me. He told me that there was no security but in instant flight, for which I made a hurried preparation. A moment's reflection, however, convinced me that flight, in my case, would be almost in vain, since doubtless my person and dress had been so circumstantially detailed, as to render escape all but impossible. 'Let us change clothes,' said O'Regan; 'our figures are much alike. I have a hackney coach at the door. Quick! we will go

to my lodgings, and I will undertake to metamorphise you in a twinkling.'

"We accordingly repaired to O'Regan's humble apartments in the vicinity of Charing Cross. Here my poor friend arrayed me in his clothes. I shaved off my whiskers, and after commissioning O'Regan, who was now dressed in my suit, to proceed to Willesden, report the existing circumstances to my wife, and, by aid of the society to which I belonged, enable her and her child to follow me, I sallied forth to Wapping, where I hoped to secure a passage in a vessel, which I was informed was on the point of sailing for New York.

"On arriving at Wapping, I learned to my dismay, that the ship had sailed in the morning. On further inquiry, however, it appeared that she was to wait a few hours at Gravesend. Thither I immediately proceeded, and, after much effort, succeeded in getting aboard the ship, though in this I should have failed, had it not been for the zealous agency of a river-pilot, known by the *sobriquet* of Jolly Jen, for there was so terrific a storm on that night, that no one else would venture to take me off to the ship."

"I saw the very man by the merest chance not long ago," interrupted young Darcy; "he told me this identical circumstance, which he was induced to mention, on observing my strong likeness to the fugitive gentleman."

"The hand of Providence is in all this, my dear son; and your captivity was mercifully ordained to bring you to gladden the heart of your unhappy father, and lead him to his wife."

"My dream, too," exclaimed the young man, is now fulfilled."

"Your dream!" echoed the father, "let me hear it. But no; not now. I will first finish my recital.

"We had not been at sea a couple of days, when a French privateer bore down upon us, and we soon became an easy capture. Being taken to the port of St. Malo, I, the other passengers, and crew, were marched to this place, and for some time confined where you are now imprisoned. The tyranny of Bonaparte placed us under the strictest *surveillance*, and I have reason to believe that every letter I endeavoured to send to your dear mother, was wantonly and needlessly intercepted, for no answer ever reached me. I was thus a sufferer under the

despotism of two governments, though each was in deadly opposition to the other.

"In this confinement I lived several years, until the short peace of Amiens liberated the English captives. The rigour of my imprisonment, meanwhile, had been so far relaxed as to allow of my living out of the citadel, and forming acquaintance with some families in the town. No sooner, however, was I permitted to leave France, than I flew, without a moment's pause, on the route to London, in the hope that I might discover my wife, and again clasp her and her child in my arms.

"I soon reached the English metropolis, and lost no time in commencing an earnest search for those so dear to me. No means were left untried to trace the residence of my wife, but all were vain. I went to Willesden, and made the most minute inquiries there. Alas! no one in that small and secluded place had any recollection of our brief sojourn in the village so long ago. After a second prolonged and fruitless search in the mazes of London, I became convinced that my dear wife had fallen a victim to her despair at my long absence. At length, finding that I was a total stranger in the metropolis, I resolved to return to this town, where, at least, I could obtain some solace for my broken heart in the society of a few friends; and where, also, I could earn a slight subsistence by teaching English.

"The war, however, was soon renewed, and I became a *detenu*. This mattered little to one who had no motive for returning to his native country; and here I have been permitted, on my parole, to enjoy nearly as much freedom as the natives themselves.

"But Fortune, it seems, had yet some bliss in store for me. How foolish and how sinful is despair! Judge of my astonishment—my rapture on hearing, the other day, the name of Charles Darcy among the English prisoners! To see you again, my beloved son, is transporting beyond expression. But, if in every delight something of pain is always mixed, how deeply is the pleasure of our meeting embittered by a captivity which keeps us from the sight of your dear mother! Years may pass before we can meet her again, if indeed that blessing be ever reserved for us."



"We must not abandon hope, dear father; recollect what you have just said about the folly of despair," observed the midshipman, with the elastic and unconquerable spirit of youth.

"True, true!" exclaimed the elder Darcy. "Yet whosoever did Fate so obstinately pursue me when in England, as to prevent my discovering that my dear wife still existed?"

"I can partly account for that," responded the young man. "She bore the name of another."

The elder Darcy shook in his chair, as though a mortal dart had struck him.

"What say you!" he faintly articulated.

"Be comforted," responded the youth, "she is a widow, if indeed one in her situation may be so styled."

"God of heaven! judge not my feelings too harshly. What could have tempted her to such a step?"

"The stern hand of misery," replied the son. "She was pressed down, even to the earth (as she has often told me) by poverty. She believed you were dead; and though she was prepared herself to die, she could not bear that I should perish from want."

"Poor woman!" was all the father could utter.

After another pause, he inquired if she had any children by her second marriage, which, being answered, greatly to his relief, in the negative, he next desired to know in what circumstances she was now placed.

"In affluence," replied young Darcy. "Good often comes out of evil. Under pretence of succouring her from utter destitution, Mr. Waddy, a barrister, cajoled her into marriage, knowing, at the same time, that her inheritance could be recovered. This recovery, by means of his legal subtlety, soon ensued. Had it not been for his adroitness, her relations might have succeeded for ever in their wicked spoliation. Mr. Waddy is now dead, and my mother is in full enjoyment of her rights."

"Blessings and curses come to me hand-in-hand," said the elder Darcy. "That my wife still lives, is a knowledge bringing unutterable joy—that she is prosperous, is another balm; but then, her second marriage, and our helpless captivity—what words of doom are these!"

"We must escape," exclaimed the midshipman, anxious

to change the course of his father's thoughts. "The thing is not impracticable."

"For you, perhaps, it is not," returned the elder Darcy, in an agitated tone; "but alas! I am on my parole. I must not forfeit my honour."

### CHAPTER III.

"The attempt, and not the deed,  
Confound us. Hark!"

SHAKESPEARE.

THE joy of the father in having regained his son knew no bounds. How should it? What parent exists who, after having for many years given up all hope of ever again seeing his child, should suddenly find him alive and in health—what parent, under such circumstances, would not be greedy of the presence of his offspring? To Mr. Darcy every hour not passed with his son seemed so much of existence lost. When away from him, life became not merely joyless and monotonous, but full of actual pain. The irritability—the impatient reckoning of time—the fretful and irrational estimate of the duration even of minutes intervening between the periods when he could visit the citadel—wrought upon the poor gentleman so intolerably as to render idle the dictates of prudence which might have convinced him that such constant applications for admission within the prison-gates, especially when made in order to obtain interviews with one particular individual, could not fail to draw upon him the eyes of the authorities.

But what could such considerations signify to a man afflicted with monomania on the very point to which they referred? Mr. Darcy could neither think by day, nor dream by night, of anything but his son, who had been so miraculously restored to him, and who, albeit he approached in the chains of the captive, came also invested with no inconsiderable portion of the warrior's glory. Had he not been proud of his offspring he would have been unworthy the name of father.

*But with the restoration of his son came intelligence*

of his son's mother—She, the adored of his youth, whom he had given up for lost, over whom his heart had mourned in bitter sorrow, was still living! Was there not sufficient reason in this thought to divide his heart with the joy inspired by the presence of his son? Alas for human selfishness! The news of his wife's second marriage (though in consenting to such she became the victim of circumstances,) coupled with the hopelessness of ever again seeing her, made her image fade away before the unalloyed and present enjoyment of his son's society.

Mr. Darcy was, therefore, always to be found within the walls of the citadel whenever the visits of those from without were permitted. He was, moreover, perpetually seen walking with one and the same person; that person was an English prisoner, and marked as a "*marché sujet*." This could not fail to be reported to the commandant, and the consequence was that, one evening, when the hour for the dismissal of visitors had arrived, and Mr. Darcy was about to pass through the outer gate leading to the town, he was unceremoniously pushed back, and told to consider himself a close prisoner within the walls of the citadel.

"You must mistake me, my friend," said he to the *marché* had de logis. "My name is Devon. I am a detainee, not a prisoner of war, and I am living within the town on my parole."

"My orders are to detain you," replied the officer.

"On what ground?"

"The commandant will be here to-morrow, and perhaps he may inform you."

"Perhaps?" echoed Mr. Darcy. "May I not demand from him the reasons for this apparent harshness?"

"Certainly, monsieur, you may, but then," added the *marché* had, "he may not choose to answer you."

"Insolence!" exclaimed Mr. Darcy.

"Come, come, sir," retorted the *marché* had, "I have no time for altercation. You cannot pass, I tell you. Here, Antoine," he continued, calling for one of the gendarmes, "conduct Monsieur Devon to the barracks No. 2, in the right wing."

Reasons and resistance would alike have been unavailing. Conducted by a ruffianly looking soldier, Darcy's father too passed the court yard of the prison, and

was finally lodged in a long barrack room, tenanted by about forty other captives, and situated at the very opposite part of the citadel to that which contained the house where the young midshipman of the *Nonsuch* was kept in durance.

Mr. Darcy's present companions were all evidently of the lowest rank. If the new prisoner felt some little mortification at being thus associated with persons so far beneath him in station, his sufferings were rendered intolerable by the conviction that he was condemned to a part of the prison so distant from that containing his son.

In the morning he learnt from a fellow-prisoner the cause of his detention, which, indeed, was no other than has been indicated a page or two back. Having been suspected of plotting some mischief with the young midshipman, who, as has been already stated, was branded as a *mauvais sujet*, the elder Darcy lost not only the advantage of his parole, but the infinitely more precious privilege of communing with his son, from whom he was now to be kept strictly apart.

This, indeed, was dreadful news! To have the blessing of his son's society miraculously restored to him, and then for it to be as suddenly snatched away, was beyond all measure tormenting, and almost stupified him with despair.

One morning, after he had been separated more than a week from his son, while moodily pacing the room to which he was confined, one of the prisoners, an English seaman about five-and-forty years of age, accosted him in these words:

"I axes your pardon, sir, but you does n't seem to me to like your new berth. I can't abide to see a man down-hearted. Can I do any thing for you, sir? Natur' never intended man to be down in the mouth. 'It's a long lane as has never no turnin.' I does n't give up the thoughts of getting another glimpse of my old woman at North Corner. Was you ever at Plymouth, sir!"

"I have reason to know it well, my friend; but I shall never see it more."

"Cheer up, sir,—never say die. If I can sarve ye in any way, you've only to say the word."

"Are you permitted to walk about within the citadel, or are you as strictly confined to this part as I am?"

"Why are you so anxious to marry within the walls, I ask?" he inquired. "You are, sir," added the woman, "a gentleman; - I could have said you are a wealthy man."

"I have nothing of the sort," my good mother," responded Mr. Loring, with a friendly expression on his face. "But I would not like to give credit to a man who has been so long in your position without in the least value of his services."

[illegible]

“ 1900-1901 ”

"What, my little baby?"

"Lake of the Sun"

"Why, thank you heart, I'm a little kinder myself. Lord keep ye, an', I'd lay my life down for Mr. Darcy—that I would. Fare ye well, my love!"

"From first to last, 2000, 20,000, 200,000 years."

"Must have known him, a chick, then—where he was  
fired." "

"Yes, I'm a near relation of his. I have an important communication to make to him. As he is a shipmate of yours, I'm sure you will zealously convey to him what I shall say to you."

"I figure, sir, I should only make a mess of the matter. I'm sorry, sir, we can manage the matter in another way. Could n't you see him yourself, sir?"

"Impossible."

"No, it isn't, sir. If you only can come this early morn-  
 ing I'll show you how to do this feat. The way is this:—  
 When the last evening number is over, you crack on for  
 the burrakes; turn in as fast as you can, and leave your  
 clothes at the foot of the bed. At the same time I must  
 sleep snuggy, and with my traps off seem to be groping  
 for my hat, stagger forward towards your cabin window

[illegible]

your clothes, leave mine in their stead, and reel back to my own berth. - Early in the mornin', before the prisoners begins to make a move, you must turn out: clap on my riggin', and then away with ye at once for Mr. Darcy's cell. I'll manage to hide yer long togs, an' borrow a suit o' riggin for myself from a sick man as is bad in bed wi' the roomatiz."

"Thank you for your scheme, my good friend," returned Mr. Darcy. "Let me rely on its execution this very night, and pray oblige me by accepting this," handing him a Napoleon.

"No, sir, I never took the bounty yet; 't isn't cash as can spur me to sarve Mr. Darcy."

"I meant not to offend. Will you venture on your scheme to-night?"

"Ay, as sure as Tom's Tdm."

"Agreed."

"But vast heavin' sir. Now I thinks on it, we wants somethin' more to tarn ye out ship-shape and Bristol fashion."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, ye know, sir, you've never nothin' of a tie, and without a tie you'd soon be diskivered. I've never no time to-night to transmogrify a soger's tail for ye——"

"A soldier's tail?" interrupted Mr. Darcy; but *I* require a sailor's tail."

"I knows that very well, sir; but as you can only have a sham tie, in course we can only make ye a soger's tail. Howsomer, never fear: with a wisp o' straw, a fathom o' black riband, and a hank o' real hair to curl at the end, I'll tarn out a tie for ye, as Natur need n't turn her back on."

It was consequently agreed on, that the scheme should be executed the following night; so that Mr. Darcy indulged the hope of again seeing his son on the next morning but one.

The whole discussion between Mr. Darcy and Weatherley did not occupy a quarter of an hour; and, to prevent suspicion, they now separated, having clearly understood each other as to the movements of the next night.

The time appointed arrived. Weatherley executed his plan without exciting suspicion, and the dwellers of the room were soon asleep. Mr. Darcy could hardly

close his eyes; and soon after daylight he got up, dressed himself in Weatherley's clothes, tied on the false tail, and sallied forth towards the midshipman's quarters. It was about seven o'clock in the morning when he reached them.

A slight knock at the door soon brought out the gendarme, who inquired the reason of the applicant's early visit.

"I wish to deliver a message to Mr. Darcy, an English midshipman."

"He is not here. You can't see him," replied the man, shutting the door in the face of the supposed seaman.

Here was a new difficulty. How could it be surmounted? It was plain that the youth had been removed into closer custody. But how was his father to ascertain in what part of the citadel he was now confined? To whom could he, in his present garb, apply for information? It would be unwise to expose himself to much scrutiny; for his face was well known in the citadel, and he was utterly destitute of nautical phraseology necessary for the support of his newly-assumed character. Something, it was quite clear, must be quickly decided on.

He was deliberating what measure to adopt, when, on casting his eyes upwards, and along a range of buildings not far from the midshipman's quarters, he perceived the face of a young man at an open window, which he instantly recognised to be that of his son. One point was thus gained. But how was he to obtain access to the youth? Mr. Darcy knew enough of the citadel to be aware, that in the portion of it to which his son was now consigned, the utmost strictness prevailed respecting the custody of the prisoners, who, being sent there under the arbitrary and absurd suspicions of the commandant, were kept apart from each other in little rooms or, more properly speaking, cells, and were forbidden to receive any other visits than those of the jailor.

The consciousness of all this filled Mr. Darcy with dismay. He had no friend to consult—no time for deliberation even with himself. Were he to remain lurking about, suspicion would fall on him, and he would be subjected to a dangerous examination.

"*I must make another attempt, under more favourable circumstances,*" thought he. "At present, my best course

will be to return to the barrack-room, wrap myself up in my cloak, and so remain, till night shall enable me to get rid of my disguise."

In this manner he ruminated, while standing near the closed door which he imagined led to the cells, in one of which his son was confined. He was about to retrace his steps to the barracks, when breaking the silence of that early hour, his ear caught the footsteps of persons rapidly descending the stairs within. Mr. Darcy listened attentively: the flying steps approached nearer and nearer; they reached the outer door, a bolt was suddenly drawn, and a *blanchisseuse* rushed forth, followed by a *gend'arme*.

Mr. Darcy now instinctively shrank behind an angle, formed by the bold projection of the architrave around the door, and was able, unobserved himself, to glance at the seeming fugitives.

In an instant the girl's laugh broke upon his ear.

"Oh! oh! Ma belle, c'est inutile de courir si vite—nous en aurons," exclaimed the *gend'arme*.

"On vous en souhaite."\*

"Je t'arrête au nom de L'Empereur, farçeu se."

"Vive l'Empereur! on se fiche de son *gend'arme*."

The *gend'arme*, half breathless, continued his pursuit, in which he was so engrossed as to observe nothing around, and to be for a moment forgetful of the duty imposed on him.

The thought of rushing up stairs to his son suddenly crossed Mr. Darcy's mind. The temptation was too great to permit him to weigh the folly of the attempt. The first impulse was obeyed; he darted up the steps, and to his great joy perceived his son standing at a door partly ajar.

"Charles, don't you know me?"

"Who are you?"

"Your father. Quick! Let me in!"

All this had occupied scarcely a minute from the time when Mr. Darcy first heard the footsteps on the stairs.

\* This expression of the French laundress can only find an English equivalent in the emphatic and popular phrase, "I wish you may get it."



"Good Heaven!" exclaimed the midshipman, "what is the meaning of this disguise?"

"I will tell you immediately," replied his father; "but first acquaint me with the reason of your removal to this part of the citadel."

"I hardly know," answered the youth, "unless it be attributable to the suspicion excited in the mind of the commandant, by our frequent and close conferences. But how got you up the stairs?"

"By taking advantage of the gend'arme's playful pursuit of a girl."

"Ah, my *blanchisseuse*. I was myself looking on this little trait of French gallantry."

"How long have you been here?"

"Above a week. But the disguise—the disguise. What means it?"

"I am now a prisoner in the citadel," replied the elder Darcy.

"Why, I understood you were on your parole."

"True; but the same cause that has sent you hither, my dear son, has taken from me the advantage of my parole; for which I thank Heaven, since I can now, without forfeiting my honour, join you in plotting our escape."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the light-hearted youth. "We will not again separate."

"We must. I must forthwith return to my barrack-room. It will not do to be missed at the hour of inspection. Besides, when your gend'arme takes his usual rounds, what punishment might accrue to you from my being found here? We must trust to fate for other stolen meetings, when we may, happily, hit on some scheme for deliverance."

"I tell you," pursued the son, "we must keep together."

"What mean you? You speak in riddles."

"Listen, father. Since I have been in this second place of confinement, I have planned, night and day, the means of escape. If I could succeed, I thought I might manage, on arriving at home, to get you exchanged, and thus restored to my mother. After the most anxious consideration, I became convinced that any attempt at escape by the gates would be madness: and I began to think it

might be possible to gain the roof of this building, I might let myself down into the fossé, and then scale the outer wall. No other means of access to the roof presented themselves than were afforded by the chimney. Up this accordingly I resolved to mount.

"On inspecting the chimney, however, I found it was full of gratings and bars of iron, which not only accounted for the smoke which for days had almost smothered me, but seemed to preclude the hope of passage. I was without a companion, had neither tools nor other materials, and was liable to intrusion night and day. But despair is a dull, stupid, useless thing. If I could contrive to get a few tools, and a few fathoms of-rope, I might yet succeed.

"But should Fate prosper me thus far, how were such things to be secreted from the Argus-eyes of the people about me? This was the most puzzling point of all. At last, I noticed, that, though any movement in the apartment above me was distinctly heard, I could not detect the least sound from the room below, which I knew well was tenanted. This circumstance led me to conjecture (for tribulation makes us all wonderfully keen) that there might be a double floor with a space between each. You see this flap-table supported by iron legs. These I have managed to unscrew; by their means have raised some tiles of the floor, and by digging, have verified my conjecture, and discovered a vacant space between this floor and the ceiling of the room below, of about four feet."

The elder Darcy looked down to the floor, and could perceive no sign of the displacing of the tiles.

"I was obliged to do it in a neat and workmanlike manner," said the son, smiling. "See!" And he removed a few tiles, disclosing to his parent a safe and capacious hiding-place.

"When the time arrives," continued the young man, "for going the rounds, or when I hear any one ascending the stairs, then, dear father, you must retire into this sub-tileaneous gulf. You will soon be able to emerge again into light. My allowance of food must serve for both, and we must keep watch and watch during the night till we are able to escape, of which I do not despair. *Hist!* what noise is that? Some one comes. *Quick,*

quick, dear father. There—bend your body—quick, quick!"

Mr. Darcy disappeared; and the youth had hardly time to replace the tiles, when the door was opened, and the *maréchal de logis* entered the room.

#### CHAPTER IV.

"Terror froze up his hair, and on his face  
Showers of cold sweat roll'd trembling down apace."

COWLEY.

"*Bon jour, Monsieur,*" said the *maréchal*, greeting young Darcy, as he entered the narrow apartment, "*bon jour; I am come to remove you from this part of the prison to the wing on the other side. Push that chair and table through the door way, Pierre,*" addressing the *gend'arme*, "and then remove the bedding. We must lock up the room before I conduct *l'aspiran* to other quarters."

This, under young Darcy's circumstances, was a terrible announcement. To leave the place where he imagined he could best execute his plan of escape, would in itself be a grievous calamity; but to have the room locked upon his father, while lurking in dismal concealment, was a thought of terror—nay, of madness. A flush of heat came suddenly over the youth, producing large drops of perspiration, which coursed each other rapidly over his face. This was followed by mortal paleness. He now felt cold as death itself, and trembled violently. Unless some sudden expedient should occur to him (and such was not likely, for he felt almost bereft of his senses,) his father would be condemned to dreary solitude, starvation, and death; for his escape by the window appeared impossible. The youth's energies and spirits had never failed him till the present distressing juncture. He could now scarcely keep his feet, and looked wild with dismay."

"Why, what ails you, Monsieur?" said the *maréchal*.  
*You seem very ill.*"

"*I am so,*" replied young Darcy. "*I have suffered*

much. Why am I to be removed? If it be not absolutely necessary, I am sure you will take pity on my sickness, and not expose me to the inconvenience to which I must be subjected by change of apartment in this damp month of November."

"Pardon, Monsieur," rejoined the maréchal, with some appearance of sympathy, "but I have no choice. This wing is undergoing repair. We are now removing all the prisoners, and locking up the rooms."

"If I am taken from this room this morning," said young Darcy, in a tone of despair, "I feel I shall die."

The poor youth's looks bore evidence to the truth of his words, and he sunk upon the bed in a state of seeming exhaustion.

"Pauvre garçon!" exclaimed M. la Croix. "Pierre, do you know how soon the workmen will come to this part of the building?"

"In about three days, if one may judge from the way they're now working."

Young Darcy caught at this reply. "Pray, sir," supplicated he, "let me remain for that brief period. I shall then be better. But if, with my present pain in my chest, I should be removed from this warm aspect to an unaired room on the north side, where the sun never enters, my life, I am convinced, would be forfeited."

"Well, well," responded the maréchal, "I will see the commandant on the subject of your request. He can have no wish to distress you unnecessarily. But he is compelled to act upon character. Monsieur Le Roux has described you as a '*mauvais sujet*,' and your conduct while in the midshipman's quarters had drawn upon you increased suspicion. Allons, Pierre. Bon jour, monsieur: you shall hear from me in an hour or two."

So saying, he took his leave.

The blood rushed again to the youth's heart. As soon as he thought his late visitors were no longer in danger of returning, he lifted the tiles, and his father emerged from his concealment.

"I heard it all!" exclaimed Mr. Darcy, embracing his son. "Noble boy! Your presence of mind has saved me. But what had we best do, now? Suppose they re-

fuse to let you stay? Had I not better consult your welfare and my own by returning to the barrack-room?"

"No, no," replied the son. "Retreat is not practicable. The gend'arme at the door would intercept you; and the window is too high and too strongly barred for egress that way. Besides, it is broad daylight. You have, therefore, no choice but to remain at all risks."

"But I shall be missed this evening in the barrack-room, when the names are called."

"To be sure you will," returned the midshipman; "but what of that! They'll never suspect you can be *here*; and we must take care that they don't stumble on that fact by accident. To-morrow they'll scour the country for you, and great will be their perplexity when no traces of your flight can be discovered. Besides, I have struck upon a plan which will not only mislead the commandant on the subject of your sudden disappearance, but also throw the *maréchal* and all his myrmidons on the wrong scent, touching the probability of any attempt *by me* to escape. Good heavens! what would I not give to see Emily Melton before she proceeds to Paris."

"But your plan, dear Charles?" interrupted the father.

"It is merely a letter to Miss Melton. My importunate supplication to the gend'arme to have it safely conveyed, will be quite sufficient to ensure its interception."

"Excellent! Where, my dear boy, did you acquire such foresight?"

"At sea, sir, where every good thing, good manners among the rest," returned the son, with a smile, "are learned in rare perfection."

"Good spirits too," observed the elder Darcy, "if one may judge from yours, which are so wonderfully kept up in our present critical state."

"It would never do to be down-hearted," rejoined the youth. "Our attempt must be made at night. But three or four things are necessary to be done, before we can think of commencing our flight."

"What are they?"

"First of all, we must unfix the bars in the chimney, this can be done by means of the iron legs of the flap table, with which we can loosen the brick-work wherein the bars are set. Secondly, we must provide ourselves with a rope; this seems a difficulty, indeed. Thirdly, we

must procure a map of the country: another almost insurmountable obstacle. And fourthly, we must raise some money."

"Luckily," said the elder Darcy, "I have saved fifty Napoleons. They were sent to me the other day with my clothes and linen. My books and maps were detained; I know, however, enough of the country to serve our purpose. But the rope, the most essential of all, by what means can that possibly be procured?"

"In no other way," replied the son, "than by assistance from the outside. One of my men is confined somewhere in this place. He is honest, sincere, single-minded, and brave—a jewel, but rather in the rough. If I could only see him, I should hardly fear for our success. By the by," added the young man, again looking hard at his father's disguise, "from whom did you get that dress?"

"From the very man, I suspect, to whom you have alluded. It can be no other; for he said he would lay down his life for Mr. Darcy. Is he not very fond of talking about nature?"

"The same. Poor Weatherley! I have little doubt that to-morrow, when you are missed, he will be hovering about my quarters, if he can find them out, and I know he will not easily relinquish the search. In this expectation, I shall prepare a note for him, so as to be ready the moment I see him. But, come," he continued, "let me proceed in the unfixing of the bars. I must work in silence, though, for in this place the very walls have ears."

Having extinguished the fire, and selected the piece of iron which had the least obtuse point, the midshipman commenced his work of picking out the mortar from between the bricks immediately surrounding the gratings, and which were situated only a few inches above the stove. In this operation, young Darcy was compelled to stand with part of his body in the chimney, while his father held a light upwards to assist his labours.

The day was thus consumed; and evening found the young man wearied out with his work, which, however, was successfully performed. But the youth had no little difficulty in washing himself clean of the soot in time for the night inspection.

## CHAPTER V.

"What news? Every minute now  
Should be the father of some stratagem."  
HENRY IV.

As had been anticipated, the disappearance of the supposed Mr. Devon created no little stir and confusion within the citadel. Several of the *garde nationale* set out early in the morning to scour the surrounding country, and, as he had been denounced as a "*chef de complot*," a considerable reward was offered for the capture of the fugitive, dead or alive.

On the unsuccessful return of the human blood-hounds\* in the evening, the sensation produced by the escape became stronger even than it was at first. That the soldiers who had divided their troop into little parties, and traversed every possible direction, should have failed in detecting the least trace of Mr. Devon's flight, added mystery to vexation. How could he so completely have eluded their pursuit? Some of the people in authority laid blame on the men, accusing them of want of vigi-

\* That this designation is not undeserved will appear by the following fact, recorded in Capt. Boys's (R. N.) interesting Narrative of his Captivity and Adventures in France and Flanders.—"An act of cold-blooded atrocity afterwards occurred at Givet, in the person of Hayward a midshipman: this gallant fellow, with his friend Gale, had broken out of prison in the face of day, and fled into the country. Unfortunately they were discovered, and the alarm given: two horse *gend'armes* immediately pursued, and overtook them in an open field. On their approach, Hayward, being unarmed, and seeing escape impossible, stood still, extending his hands, and exclaimed, '*Je me rends!*' But this was too favourable an opportunity to be neglected, for the savage gratification of shedding human blood. Neither the defenceless state of the individual, nor his prompt surrender, could avert these merciless miscreants from plunging their swords into his breast, and mangling the body in a horrible manner. It was afterwards taken into the prison yard, stripped naked, and exposed to the view of the prisoners, for the purpose of intimidating others from the like attempt. Gale gave himself up at the same time; and though he received several wounds, they did not prove mortal."

lance: others thought the poor Englishman had fallen a victim to his own rash attempt, and been drowned in the fossé. In this latter supposition they were confirmed by the following intercepted letter to Miss Melton, which, as the reader already knows, young Darcy intended to write as a feint.

Lower Citadel,  
November 27th, 180—

“My dear Miss Melton,

“I am delighted to hear your papa has at length obtained permission to proceed with his family to Paris. I trust on his arrival in ‘the great capital,’ he will not forget to lend his old shipmate a helping hand; and that he will try what can be done with the authorities to effect my exchange. My health is too delicate to endure close imprisonment.

“I understand I have been officially reported to the commandant as a ‘*mauvais sujet*,’ and that I am indebted to the monster Le Roux for this *distinction*. But however long I may be confined within these walls, I am determined to pursue a conduct which shall merit a designation the very reverse.

“I am much distressed at the sudden disappearance of poor Mr. Devon. I fear he has forfeited his life to some rash and futile endeavour to escape. If, as I suspect, he made the attempt to cross the deep ditch which surrounds the citadel, there can be little doubt of his fate. Poor man! what could have induced him to such an act? I dread to think of it.

“As for myself, I mean to adopt ‘*patience*’ as my motto; and when I can procure a few French books, apply myself assiduously to the study of the language. I comprehend it tolerably well: but to appreciate its beauties, I must make myself master of its idiom.

“Oh! that I could accompany you to Paris. Pray remember me kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Melton, and entreat your papa to apply for my exchange. The *gend’arme* waits: so I must conclude.

“Yours sincerely,

“CHARLES DARCY.”

*Thus strengthened in their conjecture, orders were*



given that the fossé should be diligently dragged—a measure that was soon put into execution. One whole day was expended in this useless labour, which ended only in poisoning the water, by stirring up the sub-aqueous deposit of black and filthy mud, which had scarcely been disturbed in the memory of man.

While this tedious process was going on, a few midshipmen, who tenanted the apartment over-looking the fossé, were seen gazing out of the windows, laughing at the disappointment and perplexity of the Frenchmen. Some of these light-hearted youths even went so far as to exclaim, every now and then, as the vexation of the *searchers* became more apparent and ludicrous, “Ah, c’est inutile! Il est parti en poste pour l’Angleterre.”

These taunts tended not a little to exasperate the *gend’arme*, who heaped every malediction on the head of the fugitive, and hoped he was smothered beyond the reach of mortal drag.

Nothing further could be done. The Frenchmen were utterly confounded. Their boasted penetration and sagacity were at fault, and they were glad to stifle any allusion to an affair in which they had evidently been outwitted. Nothing more therefore was said of the escape of Mr. Devon.

But though the subject was thus consigned to oblivion, Weatherley pondered ceaselessly on the disappearance of the English prisoner. He resolved to find out where young Mr. Darcy was confined, and to place himself beneath his window, in the hope of being seen.

This was precisely what had been anticipated by the two captives, who were constantly on the watch for such an event. Accordingly, on the day succeeding that which had been occupied in dragging the fossé, being the third morning subsequently to the supposed flight of Mr. Devon, Weatherley was descried loitering about the court-yard immediately below young Darcy’s room. The seaman soon recognised his youthful officer, who, having already prepared a letter, deposited it in a stocking which seemed to fall accidentally out of window, and fortunately was picked up by Weatherley without attracting observation.

No sooner was the old Naturalist able to seclude himself for a few minutes than he perused the letter, which

briefly stated the writer's intention to escape, provided he (Weatherley) could manage to procure for him a rope of a certain length, and furnish a hauling-line, by which it could be drawn in at the window. A signal, too, was proposed, by which communication was to be ensured.

"As to the hauling-line," said the quarter-master to himself, "I can manage that easily enough. The ball o' twine I got to work the cabbage-net will do for that; but as for ten or twelve fathom of inch or inch-an'-a-half rope, that's a reg'lar pauler.\* Howsomever, will's the word. Natur never leaves a fellow long in the larch."

In deliberating within himself how this rope could possibly be procured, during which he was more than once at his wit's end, and in utter despair, a bright thought suddenly flashed across his mind, as is often the case at the eleventh hour, and when even Hope seems to have abandoned us. The well-rope in the midshipmen's yard—might not that be purloined? This rope would be the more valuable, inasmuch as it was ready rove through a tail-block, so as to facilitate either ascent or descent. No time was lost in inspecting it; but, alas! it was found to be so decayed, as to be deemed not trustworthy for the contemplated purpose.

"This 'ill never do," thought Weatherley; "it's too long-jaw'd; it's as rotten as a caulker's length of rum-bowlin'. I should n't wonder if they'd be glad of a new one, so we must condemn it as unfit for sarvus."

So saying, the old fellow took out his knife, and hacked the strands at different distances so effectually as to render the rope unfit for further use. It accordingly broke on the first attempt to raise a bucket of water.

This demolition of their rope was attributed by the English midshipmen to the malignity of the French, who, as they thought, not content with holding them in durance, wished to plague them unnecessarily. But, however, this may be, it was certain the "young gentlemen" could not subsist without water; a subscription was therefore set on foot among themselves to purchase another rope.

Old Weatherley had reckoned on this, being precisely the method he had devised for procuring strong and serviceable gear. No sooner was the new rope supplied.

than the quarter-master, in the dusk of the evening, which succeeded a foggy, drizzly day, found means to transport the tail-block and the rove rope beneath the window, where the young officer was confined. The signal was given, which being answered by the watchful mid, the ball of twine, intended for the hauling-line, was thrown into the open window, and dexterously caught by young Darcy's hands, protruded between the iron bars.

In unwinding the ball (which it may be imagined was speedily done,) a slip of paper was found, whereon was written,

"I likes yer notion. There's natur in it. I'm ready to jine co. whenever ye says the word; for stay I does n't another hour after ye cuts yer stick. I can manage the haulin'-line, and, what's better, I can crib the new well-rope, tail-block, and all. If you can unship one of the iron bars of the window, so as to rouse me in, you can whip me up as easy as a quarter of beef.

"Yours to command,

"TOM W.———"

Now it fortunately happened that, in considering every possible means of escape (though the chimney was the favoured one,) young Darcy and his father had investigated every thing within and without their room. In their scrutiny, they had discovered a fissure in the sill of the window, occasioned by the insertion of one of the bars in the stone work. The portion thus ruptured might easily be loosened from the rest, so as to enable them to detach the bar, and give room for the admission of Weatherley.

The ready-rove well-rope having been hauled in, the fragment of the stone was now removed, the bar taken out of its socket, and, after securing the tail-block to the upper extremity of another bar, the running part of the rope, or, as Darcy termed it, "the whip," was overhauled down to Weatherley. All this scarcely occupied five minutes.

Seating himself in the bight of a bowline knot, the quarter-master was soon whipped in under cover of the darkness and the drizzle, and was inclosed in the same

room with the young officer to whom he was so sincerely devoted."

"Hush! hush!" exclaimed young Darcy, as he cast off the tail-block from the standing bar, and replaced that which had been detached. "For heaven's sake, make no noise! We're now all right. To-morrow night we'll run the rig."

"In course," said Weatherley, "ye means to have a reg'lar rindevoo?"

"Rendezvous! Out of this room, old boy, you don't start tack or sheet, till we take our final departure."

"Lord love ye, Mr. Darcy, I shall miss my muster to-night. Sure to be diskivered in the mornin'."

"No you wont, old fellow; look here." And the midshipman disclosed the chasm between the floors. "Here you must stow yourself away till the coast is clear."

"With all my heart, sir. It's not so bad as the Jane's fore-peak: only, to be sure, a fellow *had* company there."

"You shall not want for company here. You've heard all about Mr. Devon?"

"Yes, poor gemman! I'd never a notion he meant to cut his stick. I wou'd n't a spurred him on, if I had n't a thought he only wanted to see *you*."

"You spurred him in the right way, old boy, for here he is."

"You *does* n't say so?"

At this moment the elder Darcy was seen peering through the chasm, where he had been "clapping on the whip-fall:" and like a "tierer in the tier," coiling it away out of sight below.

"Dash my wig, who have we *here*?" exclaimed Weatherley, approaching the person of the metamorphosed landsman. "Hollo! *my* riggin'. I'm blest if it is n't *he*. Lord love the man! What a fright ye gave a fellow. Thought he was five fathom deep in the thundrin' mud. Crappo's regularly done. Did n't I tell ye, my tie and togs 'ud do the thing. I know'd it."

"This gentleman," said the midshipman, cutting short Weatherley's joyous strain, "is my father. I've no time for further explanation. The turnkey's hour approaches. So between decks you must both dive till the coast is

clear. Then, though short commons, we can pipe to supper."

"I knows there's a southerly wind in the bread-bag; but never mind that, I've summet here," said Weatherley, drawing a flask from his pocket, "as 'll keep us weather-tight till morn. Come, gemmen, s'pose we drinks luck an' life to mud-larkin'."

"No, no, Weatherley," replied the midshpman, "we shall want that liquor to splice the main brace on more urgent occasions. Come, dive, old fellow. Time's precious."

The elder Darcy and the quarter-master now disappeared between the floors. In a short time, the turnkey paid his visit, and all was made safe for the night.

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## CHAPTER VI.

"Danger, thou dwarf dress'd up in giant clothes,  
That show'st far off still greater than thou art,  
Go, terrify the simple and the guilty."

We dare look on thee  
In thy worst shapes, and meet thee in them too."

SUCKLING.

DURING the occurrence of the foregoing incidents, a fresh source of consternation in the citadel was furnished by the absence of Weatherley at the evening inspection. As in the case of Mr. Devon, the roll to muster was beaten, guns were fired by way of alarm to the adjacent country, and several of the *garde nationale* were dispersed in different directions to capture the runaway. As young Darcy had often been seen in close conversation with Mr. Devon, and as Weatherley was a shipmate of the former, it was deemed advisable to make a sudden and unusually early visit to the midshipman's place of confinement, to ascertain whether he was still in safe custody.

It was scarcely light when Weatherley, who was keeping watch by the bed-side of the youth, heard footsteps *stealthily* creeping up the stairs. He gave one rapid glance at the midshipman—satisfied himself that he was

fast asleep—sprang to the opening in the floor under the table—descended, and drew a piece of rug over the cavity, at the moment that a gend'arme with a lantern in his hand entered the room.

Advancing to the bed-side, the man held his light over the pillow, and finding that his prisoner was fast asleep, and that every thing about was perfectly quiet, he left the room to report that all was safe, as regarded *l'aspiran*.

The advance of day was marked by a steady and drenching rain. Young Darcy, unconscious of the "domiliary visit" to which he had just been subjected, arose, and proceeded to *disinter* his companions, congratulating them on the state of the weather, which was likely not only to swell the water of the fossé, and thus afford sufficient depth of fluid to buoy them up in swimming across it, but would keep all idlers in the citadel within doors, and confine the very sentinels to their boxes.

The rain continued unabated throughout the day: night came on, and with it came a strong gale from the west, which, however, did not, as is often the case, blow away the rain, but only made it worse, by driving it in a semi-horizontal direction.

The turnkey had now paid his last visit. All around seemed hushed. Nought was heard but the howling of the wind and the pattering of the heavy rain.

"Now," said young Darcy, addressing his father and Weatherley, as he drew them on tip-toe stealthily toward the fire-place, "the hour has arrived that is to make or mar us." Being the youngest and lightest of limb, I shall at once mount the chimney, taking this bar with me. When I reach the top (and we are not very far from the roof) I shall place it securely across the funnel."

"I knows," interrupted Weatherley: "like a capsan bar across a hatchway."

"Exactly so. Then I shall send the hauling-line down for the tail-block and whip-purchase. When secured aloft, three shakes of the fall will indicate its readiness for use. You, Weatherley, will then seat my father in the bight of a bowlin knot, and whip him up, as we did you through the window. As soon as my father is safely landed aloft, I shall overhaul the fall-down for you, and you can readily rouse yourself up hand over hand."

"So far so good," said Weatherley; "but then, young gentleman, how are you to shin-up? Can ye come the chimney-sweeper's purchase? Can't do that, never do nothin'. It's all knee, back, and elbow work, ye know; and, moreover, if ye does n't hold well on with yer knees, you're sure to come down by the run. Now if ye could find summet rough an' ragged to kiver the cap o' one o' yer knees, you'd mount a ree-vo like a risin' lark. Lot's see," added the quarter-master, looking round the room, "is there never nothin' in this beggarly place as 'll do to convert into a knee-kiver?"

The scanty furniture of the room did not offer any choice of expedients; but at length Weatherley cast his eyes on a small snucopan, in which the midshipman was wont to heat his miserable allowance of soup-maigre.

"The lid of this," said he, "will do for one knee, providin' we hacks the edge to make it hold its own."

"Our next move," resumed young Darcy, "must be the descent from so perilous a height to the rim of the fossé, which lies in the rear of this building. As soon as we are safely landed, we must swim over the ditch, when the remainder of our escape from the citadel and town will be comparatively easy."

"But," interposed the older Darcy, "should we succeed so far as to be able to swim across the moat, how are we to climb the almost perpendicular bank of brick-work by which it is inclosed?"

"That's a regular pauler," exclaimed Weatherley.

"The face of the wall is broken in one part," said young Darcy, "and forms a sort of ladder for any one who might desire to ascend it. Towards this point we must swim."

"Got the right bouzin'?" asked Weatherley.

"I know them," replied the midshipman. "You will have nothing to do in the water but to follow me. I shall take with me a skipping-line, by way of a man-rope. This, as soon as I gain the parapet, I can heave down for the assistance of my father, or you, Weatherley. Now let us think a little on our next move. We must not be entirely unarmed; and yet I know not how weapons are to be procured."

"It is impossible," remarked the older Darcy.

"Have you never no pepper?" asked Weatherley.

"Pepper?" exclaimed young Darcy. "What do you mean? You talk nonsense."

"No, I does n't, sir. A paper or two o' ground pepper is worth more nor twenty pair o' barkin' pops. For, s'posin' (and you 'd find it no easy matter to keep 'em dry) you comed to use 'em in self-defence, the report 'ud blow all. Whilst, on t'other tack, the dust dowses a a Johnny Darmerie's top-lights, an' leaves him as helpless as a hulk, afore the feller can find out there 's even mischief in the wind. Moreover, you should always have yer knives on the half-cock, ready for use."

"We understand you, now," said the midshipman. "Fortunately I have some of that pungent powder in the cupboard here. Quick! let each of us wrap a paper of it in his neck-kerchief, that we may keep it dry. And now, I believe, I am ready to receive my knee-armour, and mount."

The iron lid having been prepared as well as circumstances would admit, was well lashed round the youth's knee—the bar of iron was secured to his person, and young Darcy disappeared up the chimney. His father waited the result in trembling anxiety.

A more anxious period of time can hardly be conceived than that during which the elder Darcy and Weatherley waited for the signal from the midshipman overhead. In climbing the chimney, he suffered excessive torment. His elbows were chafed raw; and as he knew not the necessity of covering his face, his eyes suffered extremely from the soot, which, moreover, nearly choked him. The two companions below thought his ascent would never be effected, so impatient were they.

At length, however, the youth gained the summit, when he lost no time in letting down his hauling-line. To this, the rope and tail-block were quickly attached, which, being drawn up, was fastened, according to the proposed plan, to the bar across the funnel.

"Now, sir," said Weatherley to the elder Darcy, "clap your seat in the bight of that ere: fancy yourself in the chair, and I'll whip you up like a lady."

This was soon done, and the father and son were together on the roof of the building. The rope being again



lowered, Weatherley took his place in the bowline knot, and hauled himself up hand over hand,

He had no sooner, however, joined his fellow-fugitives, than, feeling about in his pockets, he exclaimed aloud, "Dash my wig! I've forgot the brandy-bottle."

"Qui va là?" growled a rough voice from below.

"Do you hear that?" whispered the elder Darcy.

"Good heaven, Weatherley! what could have possessed you to sing out in that manner?"

"The loss of the brandy, to be sure, sir. What are we to do without it, after we cross the ditch? It's no use talking. Here's down the chimney again for it."

He accordingly lowered himself as quick as lightning; but his feet had no sooner touched the bars of the grate, than his ancles were grasped by a strong hand, and he was dragged forcibly into the room. Lifting his eyes, he saw that his assailant was one of the *gend'armes* stationed about the prison.

Weatherley being now lodged in the room, the *gend'arme* darted towards the door, no doubt with the intention of alarming the guard; but the quarter-master was too quick for him. Seizing him by the throat, he forced him into the middle of the room, and a desperate struggle instantly ensued. With Weatherley's gripe upon his throat, the soldier was unable to utter a word, but being a taller and stouter man than the sailor, the latter was quickly pressed to the floor, though, as he relaxed not his gripe, the Frenchman was dragged down with him.

"Now or never," thought Weatherley, as with his left hand he sought for his knife in the pocket of his jacket. This was soon found; one blow, and the *gend'arme* rolled over, apparently deprived of life.

Not a moment was to be lost by Weatherley. Though panting, nay almost breathless, with his struggle, he gently opened the door, transferred the key to the inside, made the lock fast upon the dead or dying soldier, took his brandy-bottle from the table, and hauled himself once more up the chimney.

Emerging upon the roof, he found his companions in considerable alarm at the length of his stay. "Something *has happened* below: I am sure of it. We heard a slight noise in the room," exclaimed the midshipman, in an under tone. "What were you at?"

"Why, I had to battle the watch with a thundrin' soger as hauled me by the heels into the room."

"Then all is over! We are lost!" ejaculated the elder Darcy.

"Has any alarm been given?" asked young Darcy.

"No."

"How did you get away from the man?"

"Why, we had a tussle: if he'd got the better o' me, 't was up with all. So I keeps a grip on his throat to prevent his singin' out, and settles the business with my knife."

"What! killed him?"

"I hope not. But he couldn't speak nor move a limb; so I locked the room inside, and it 'ill take 'em a little time to break open the door; though, if the fellow came spyin' of his own accord, they mayn't miss him till mornin'."

"What an unfortunate occurrence!" exclaimed young Darcy. Not a moment is to be lost. Retreat to our room is no longer practicable, even if we desired it. Every hazard must now be dared. Quick! Hitch the tail of the block round the chimney top. Down we must go directly."

No time was lost in securing the block. The midshipman was soon swinging in mid air, lowering himself gradually to the brink of the fossé.

As the father saw his son dropping from the roof, and disappearing in the darkness on that fearful descent, a shudder came over him—he feared that he was lost to him for ever!

"Come, come, don't be down-hearted," whispered Weatherley. "The young gemman knows well what he's about. He's had a worse drop nor that afore now. I'll lower ye handsomely enough. So keep your spirits up: we shall be in the water presently. 'T will wash this soot off."

A shake of the rope from below indicated that the youth was safely landed, and that Weatherley might round the rope up, by which to lower the elder Darcy.

This also was safely accomplished: the quarter-master soon followed his companions, when, taking care to unreeve the rope from the block overhead, he lowered it quietly into the dyke, so as it should sink out of sight.

"Now for the water," said young Darcy. "We can all swim. Let us first take off our coats, and tie them on our backs like knapsacks. There, quick! quick! that's right." So saying, the youth stealthily lowered himself into the moat.

"He's off, by the Lord!" exclaimed the quarter-master. "It's our turn now, sir," he added to the elder Darcy; and they both slid gently down into the ditch.

The midshipman led the way to the broken wall, where he had scarcely, however, succeeded in planting his foot in one of the interstices, than his father exclaimed, "Oh, Charles, the cramp, the cramp! I drown!"

"For God's sake, Mr. Darcy," ejaculated Weatherley, addressing the midshipman, "don't come down. Get to the top of the bank as fast as you can; I can hold yer father up for a minute or two, till you are able to heave the line into his hands."

Gaining the summit of the bank, and acting on Weatherley's suggestion, the youth had soon the satisfaction of rescuing his parent from his imminent danger.

Weatherley was now climbing the wall of the moat, when a soldier on duty was heard to make his usual cry, "*Sentinelle, prenez garde à vous!*"

At this, the quartermaster, pausing in his ascent, and directing his voice to his friends above, said in a low tone, "Fall down on your faces till the soger goes back to his box. He wont be out again, in such rain as this, till he's obligated to sing out the next quarter."

In a few minutes after this, the three companions were so far safe as to have gained the parapet above the moat. The night was dark, dismal, and rainy, with occasional gusts of wind from the S. W., the loud howling of which was most suspicious to the attempt of the prison-breakers.

"Has the cramp left you now, father?" inquired the youth.

"I'm still in pain," replied Mr. Darcy; "but being no longer in the water, the immediate peril is past; though with these wet clothes clinging to me, I feel chilled to death."

"Take a drop of this here," said Weatherley, handing the flask of brandy. "Come, gemmen, drink, and then heave a hand."

The brandy, as might be supposed, was of infinite

comfort to the half-drowned fugitives; who, at length, after undergoing several minor dangers, and with great difficulty climbing the outer wall, emerged into the open country.

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## CHAPTER VII.

"Success, the mark no mortal wit  
Or surest hand can always hit :  
For whatsoe'er we perpetrate,  
We do but row, we're steer'd by Fate."

HUDBRAS.

THEY now walked on during the remainder of the night, without halting for more than a few minutes at a time. In this way they had accomplished by dawn a distance from Valenciennes little short of twenty miles. The rain continued to come down in torrents. Not a creature was encountered on the road, and the wayfarers, though faint and weary, were beginning to congratulate themselves on their success so far, when the elder Darcy suddenly exclaimed,

"Didn't you see that?"

"What?" asked his son.

"The flash of an alarm-gun, repeating the signal from Valenciennes! We shall be apprehended by daylight."

"Bless your heart, sir," said Weatherley, "there's never nothin' to fear in that flash. It's never more nor one of natur's guns. The lightnin' has been playin' about for the last half hour. I'm sorry you didn't keep to my riggin'. You wouldn't then have been so narvous. Why, I'd bet a week's grog, if we had it, that we shan't be missed till the morning muster."

The sun rose upon another rainy day, and the fugitives, now half-starved, thoroughly drenched, and galled in the feet, were still compelled to toil on. To yield to the pressure of fatigue and halt, would have been madness. They were walking for life.

After labouring onwards about ten miles further, the physical and moral energy of the companions was fairly overcome. Nothing could so far have sustained them amidst their many perils and exertions, but the longing to see once again their relatives and native land. But

the impetus given by this desire could not last for ever: it had now spent itself. They were utterly exhausted.

"Let us pause awhile," said the elder Darcy. "I am dying of fatigue and want of food, and my feet will no longer support me. I hoped that before this we should have reached the village of Beaumont. I wonder if we are travelling northwards."

"I am sure we are, sir," observed Weatherley; "for I just now got a glimpse of the north star. What smoke is that risin' into the sky, about a mile ahead? I'm sure it comes from more nor one house."

"Then," returned Mr. Darcy, "we are near Beaumont, after all. This inspires me with a little new life. Let us try to stagger on thither. Relief is at hand."

"How?"

"I have a friend there, a humble tradesman, who lived a few years ago in Valenciennes. He was dragged to the bar of justice on a false charge, as a felon. The evidence against him was subtly contrived, and he would have been found guilty and executed, had I not, during the time I lodged in his house, become possessed of knowledge sufficient to secure his acquittal. Subsequently, he left the town in disgust, and removed to Beaumont, which I now believe is near at hand."

"A friend in view, old fellow," said young Darcy, cheering Weatherley.

"Remain here," continued the father, "while I struggle onwards in search of St. Juste. He is the very man to serve us, for he is a dealer in ready-made clothes. If I succeed in my search, I shall get from him some new suits, which, Heaven knows, we want, and which will effectually disguise us. In two hours I will be back."

And Mr. Darcy left his son and Weatherley crouching at the foot of a haystack.

In less than the time mentioned, young Darcy perceived a figure approaching in a blouse frock, bearing a basket in his hand. He could hardly recognise his father in his peasant's disguise, but all doubt was speedily at an end. The elder Darcy had found St. Juste, by whom he had been furnished with a dress for himself and his two companions. The grateful Frenchman, had, moreover, supplied him with food and wine, and placed in the basket provisions for the other fugitives.

Having refreshed themselves, Weatherley and young Darcy changed their clothes, packed the old garments in the basket, and the party soon resumed their route, passing through Beaumont, for the purpose of depositing in St Juste's hands the basket containing the attire in which they originally escaped. This was to be destroyed.

So far, their enterprise had prospered. Nothing, indeed, disastrous occurred for several days. As the senior Darcy could speak French like a native, and as the other two were mute upon every occasion, the companions escaped suspicion, and were taken to be in reality that which they assumed to be.

One morning, however, as they were skirting the confines of a wood, three *gensd'arme* burst out from the cover of the trees, and, seizing the fugitives, demanded where they were going. The answers of the elder Darcy appeared to be equivocal, the soldiers were about to detain them as suspicious subjects. Indeed one of the *gensd'arme* had seized Weatherley by the tail, when the quarter-master suiting the action to the word, exclaimed, "Pepper the beggars!" In a moment, a well-aimed broadside of the tormenting powder was discharged into the faces of the *gensd'arme*. Blinded by the pepper, their hands were instinctively lifted to their eyes, and they seemed, by the spasmodic motion of their limbs, to be suffering intense torture. They were dancing about like madmen.

Profiting by their *coup-de-poudre*, the companions took to their heels, and continued running till pursuit must have been fruitless.

"Now, Weatherley," said young Darcy, "you must be convinced of the folly of continuing to wear your tail. Not only does it serve as a handle for an enemy's grasp, but also may be the means of identifying yourself and friends."

"After no little persuasion, the quarter-master permitted the midshipman to 'dock his tie,' observing, as the knife severed the hair from his head, "'twas like partin' with a fellow's limb."

Nothing particular occurred after this, during the weary march of the fugitives, day after day, northward. Though they suffered much from the prevailing rain, and

sometimes sleet, the weather, by diminishing the number of travellers, was so far favourable to their purpose.

At length while pursuing their route to Blankenberg, a village on the coast, not far from Ostend, they approached a solitary cabaret, which they entered for the purpose of procuring rest and refreshment. On seeing them, the landlady, with an earnest gaze, exclaimed,

"Mon Dieu, ce sont des Anglais!"

Mr. Darcy in vain assured her that he and his companions were French peasants. Madame Broughel (such was the landlady's name) would not give up the idea that they were English prisoners of war endeavouring to escape. She had formerly been a servant in an English family, with whom she had lived so happily, that she had imbibed a sort of Anglo-mania. She also imagined, poor woman, that she *spoke* English like a native.

"Do misfortun," said she, "vous always welcome to mien ouse. I do vel know you are de Engleleech fly from de prison. I vil assist you in de way. In four or five oder days, you shaul see dear Engleland. Dat you shaul."

A comfortable breakfast was soon spread before a good fire; and the poor travellers partook eagerly of the repast. This being over, Madame Broughel, fearing the arrival of gend'arme, hurried the companions into a hay-loft in the rear of the building, where, confiding in the good woman's sincerity, they stretched themselves, after hauling up the ladder, and fell into a long and sound sleep,—the first they had enjoyed under shelter for many long days and longer nights.

Madame Broughel's cabaret was a house of police correspondence, and visited often in the week by military patrols. Though at first this might have appeared to increase the danger of the English party, it in reality contributed to their security, as such would be the last place to come under suspicion.

Meantime Madame Broughel had not been idle. To facilitate their final escape, she had already secured the services of an individual well acquainted with the localities of the coast: he was, indeed, no other than her own brother,—a fisherman belonging to Blankenberg.

To strengthen Madame Broughel's agency, the Darceys offered to secure her brother the payment of one hundred pounds should he succeed in conveying them across the

Channel. This was agreed to; and, in order that there should be no mistake in finding the fisherman as well as his schuyt, it was proposed that the younger Darcy, dressed as a servant girl, should follow Madame Breughel to the beach at Blankenberg, where her brother would be found with his boat. This was accomplished; and it was agreed between mynheer and the metamorphosed mid, that, as the boat was hauled up at high-water mark on the beach, the attempt should not be made until the highest spring tide, which would ensue on the third night from that time.

The interval, though passed in bodily repose, (of itself an infinite blessing to men who had suffered such toils and privations,) was nevertheless marked by almost intolerable mental uneasiness.

At length the moment for the final departure arrived. It was two hours after midnight. The cabaret had long been closed. The Darcys and Weatherley felt some concern in leaving their kind hostess without one parting word. But all was dark around, and the inmates of the house, were, no doubt, fast asleep.

In descending the ladder communicating with the loft, the figure of a woman was dimly discerned under the shed, at the base of the steps. This proved to be Madame Breughel, who, good soul! in the excess of her solicitude for the fate of the English prisoners, had not gone to bed, but waited up to arouse them in time for their appointment. Approaching and embracing each in turn, affectionate adieus were interchanged; and the kind-hearted hostess, with her eyes suffused with tears, left the fugitives, fervently ejaculating, "God bless you—speed your flight!"

The party reached the beach in about an hour. Vandergucht was discovered crouching under the bow of his boat. The midshipman tapped him on the shoulder.

"Vat!" cried the schipper, "you kom before de tide. It's no better als halb float."

"Well, it's better to be too early than too late. Where's your son?"

"He kom on de top o' de tide."

"The wind's right out?"

"De vind vos verd vel, if de schuyt vos vonce in the vater. But de floatin her vill tak moech force. Mien



vindlass too mak der tyfel's own dunder—vill tell de tale."

"We can easily trice the paul up out o' the click, and tie its tongue," said Weatherley.

Shrouded by the thick darkness, they waited in dead silence the rising of the tide, which seemed to them as though it would never reach the vessel's fore foot.

The wind, which was off the land, continued to freshen. Showers of sleet accompanied each succeeding squall; and the moon, though full and high in the heavens, was obscured by lowering clouds.

The party had been already forty minutes shivering under the boat's bow, when voices were heard in the rear, increasing in loudness, as if persons were rapidly approaching.

"Mein Got! de pateroul ist kommen," exclaimed Vandergucht. "Ve shaul nul be discover. Nossing hot dis can sev de luifs," he added, drawing the fugitives to a small skiff, which, with its thwarts out, was lying on its side close at hand.

Crouching close together on the ground, Vandergucht turned the boat bottom upwards over the prostrate party.

"I hope he is n't doin' us," said Weatherley, doubtfully. "Terrible thing to be catched like rats in a trap."

"For heaven's sake talk not such nonsense."

"I does 'nt, young gemman, talk nothin' o' nonsense; for, after all, a Flemin'er's never more nor a Welsh Frenchman."

"Hush! They're close at hand," said the elder Darcy, as the tramp of feet broke upon his ear.

For a full hour the pent-up party awaited in painful suspense the fisherman's return. But neither Vandergucht nor his son made their appearance.

"Its never no use waitin' longer," said Weatherley. "The fellow's fightin' shy. Moreover, I'm sartin it's high water. Does 'nt ye hear the wash breakin' 'gain the schuyt's bow? If we waits many minets, we'll lose the tide; and then it's all up with us. Come gemmen, we must make a move. So here's break bulk."

So saying, and bringing his back to bear against the bottom of the boat, the hidden trio were again uncased, and in a few minutes were on board the schuyt working the windlass. Embedded, as the vessel was, in the shelving shingle of the beach, the process of heaving her afloat was attended with considerable labour. But before the

turn of the tide, the schuyt was brought to her anchor in the stream.

"She's all our own," ejaculated young Darcy, in joyous accents. "Meantime to ensure success, we must do the thing man-o'-war fashion. You, father, will take this axe and cut the cable when told. I shall run the foresail up (for if we attempt to show more canvass, we shall draw upon us the eyes of the battery,) and you, Weatherley, will run aft, and take your old station at the helm.

Weatherley was soon in his station. But what was his astonishment in finding the "unshipped rudder" lying on the deck.

"What a two-faced fellow! exclaimed the quarter-master, throwing his hat petulantly on the deck. "Thought as much. Can't trust one of the breed. The cross o' Crappo's in 'em all. The jaw-breakin' beggar, with his double Dutch kiled agen the sun?"

Vain were their endeavours to ship the rudder. It became impossible to hinge the lower pintle into the gudgeon of the stern-post; and to proceed to sea, without a rudder, would have been an act of madness.

"Give me a rope," cried the daring youth, "it's a cold dive in a squall of sleet; but we must not now stand upon trifles."

Lowering himself over the stern, he commenced work in the water. Twenty minutes was he overboard before he could succeed in hanging the rudder. At length he was hauled up, the cable cut, the fore-sail run up, and the schuyt was soon flying before a timely squall. Scarcely had she got abreast of the battery, when a shot whizzed close over the head of the elder Darcy.

"Good God, Weatherley! how close to us that shot passed. Did you hear its whiz?"

"In course I did, sir, and glad I was. Whenever you hears the hiss of a shot, it's a sartin sign it does n't *hit* ye. "I'll give 'em leave now to bang away till all's blue. Go it, my sons; ye got the wrong target. Blaze away! Now the beggars 'll keep it up till daylight."

A fair wind soon brought them to the Goodwin Sands. Early on the forenoon of the following morning, they approached a lugger rigged boat working to windward.

"That's a fair trader," said Weatherley."

"If so," said the younger Darcy, "he's bound for Ostend. We had better speak him."

Waving to the lugger, she shortened sail, hove too, and a parley commenced.

"Pray get your punt out, and come on board."

"I should know that voice," returned the stranger.

"And I should know that face," rejoined the midshipman, overjoyed to find himself on the coast of his native land. "How goes on the haunted house? Eh! *Jolly Jem*? Why, father, here 's an old acquaintance of yours."

The joy of the meeting was felt equally by Robinson, who, on coming on board, was commissioned by the Darceys to communicate with Vundergucht, and learn what had prevented his return to the beach. *Jolly Jem* was further instructed to say, that the promised hundred pounds, together with the value of the schuyt and fishing gear, would be remitted as soon as the party should arrive in London.

The fugitives now shaped their course for Ramsgate, which they reached in a few hours.\*

## CHAPTER VIII.

"Every of this happy number,  
That have endured shrewd days and nights with us,  
Shall share the good of our returned fortune,  
According to the measure of their states.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

LEAVING Weatherley at Ramsgate, Mr. Darcy and his son, after little more than an hour's rest, posted off to London. The approaching event, namely, a meeting between husband and wife, after so long a separation, and under such unwonted circumstances as those appertaining to the parties in question, was one of all-absorbing interest to Darcy, not unmingled with pain. The poor lady, herself, was utterly unconscious of what awaited her: she was ignorant even that her son had been taken prisoner; but that her first husband should be still alive and coming to her, was a truth beyond the shapings of her imagination, in its most dreamy mood. Had such news been abruptly communicated, the joy would have been too vast for her bosom, and she might have died under so strong an ecstacy.

\* For an incident in the foregoing chapter, the author is indebted to the interesting narrative of Captain Boys, R. N.

On arriving in London, young Darcy flew to his mother's house, and was received by her with the fond delight which none except a parent can know. But when she saw his pale and toil-worn visage, her heart throbbed with alarm, and she eagerly questioned him as to the sufferings which could have induced so great a change. The young officer now related the story of his captivity and escape; and, with infinite caution and address, prepared his mother to receive the amazing intelligence of his discovery in the prison at Valenciennes. At length she was permitted to know all.

Vain would be any attempt to paint her first impulse of incredulity, which only gave way to the irresistible evidence in possession of her son, nor the throbbings of her breast at the news, nor the distressing conflict which ensued in her womanly heart, as in one moment she burned with impatience to clasp the restored one to her arms, and, as in the next, considering what had passed during his absence (innocent as she was,) she thought she could never look him again in the face. All we can state is, that under the careful management of the son, his parents were again brought together—that all memory of the so-called widow's second marriage was buried in oblivion—and that Darcy and his wife were once more united in wedlock, Mr. Lawrence officiating as minister. The jocund clergyman was almost beside himself with joy on the occasion.

The contriver of all the sufferings of Mr. and Mrs. Darcy, the wretched Mordaunt, had not for many years been heard of. If he were still living, it was not likely he would ever dare to show himself again in society. Charity might hope he was dead, a fate which would be preferable to life, with a conscience so laden as his.

Elizabeth Lazarus, at the earnest entreaty of Mrs. Darcy, continued to live with that lady. An affection, now the growth of years, had arisen between them, and parting would, indeed, have been sorrow. The Jewess was not, however, persuaded to look upon Mrs. Darcy's house as her permanent home, till the offer had been strengthened by the repeated solicitations to that effect of Mr. Darcy and his son. Preparatory, however, to this final arrangement in her behalf, she made one visit to her native place, Exeter; but every member of her family *had disappeared from that town, and she experienced the*

bitter surprise which long estrangement from home scarcely ever fails to produce. She had never seen the place since Bobson, her betrayer, carried her off from her friends, on the night when Mr. Darcy and Miss Vernon eloped, at which time Elizabeth was on a visit at Teignmouth. Here the London ruffian had become acquainted with the Jewess, and, being stricken by her beauty, determined on her ruin.

In furtherance of his master's designs, Bobson had "pumped" the ostler at the inn, where Darcy had ordered the post-chaise for himself and Miss Vernon. With the intelligence, thus obtained, he hastened to Ravenswood, but the junior Mordaunt was not at home. As, however, it was necessary to frustrate the escape of the lovers, no time was to be lost; and Bobson, himself, undertook, by a stratagem, to remove the chaise from its appointed rendezvous. To carry it on to Exeter, obviously required the agency of a female. Elizabeth was reluctantly persuaded to aid the deceit, believing that she should be left with her friends at Exeter; but, during their progress in the chaise, Bobson found means to induce her, under promise of marriage, to travel on with him to London, and thus did the poor girl become an outcast from her family, and from the people of her faith.

The worthy chaplain of the Nonsuch was now fortunately enabled, like other "gentlemen of England, to dwell at home at ease." A living, in the gift of his old friend, Mr. Darcy, became vacant, and was instantly bestowed on the preserver of the rightful heir of Ravenswood, who having obtained the permission of his parents, was following up the first impression he had made on the heroine of the Jane, the family of the Meltons having already reached England in a cartel.

Sir Montague Mute resumed his seat in the senate. The purse and powerful influence of Lady Puffington again returned him—a ministerial tool. Nor was this all her ladyship effected for her loving lord. Conceiving that the command of a single ship was too circumscribed for the exercise and energies of an enlarged and enlightened mind, the dowager succeeded in obtaining for the *baronet* a seat at a certain Blue Board, in the vicinity of *Whitehall*.

The appointment of Mute as a Lord of the Admiralty excited in the Service a general feeling of surprise. But

by way of palliative, it was whispered by authorities, that it was better to instal him in *office* ashore, than to leave him in *command* afloat.

For upwards of four years Sir Montague retained his place, until, on a change of administration, he was unseated in his *saddle* by a Cornet of Dragoons.

During the baronet's official career, "his door," to employ a vulgar phrase, "was never darkened" by even the shadow of a brother bluc. His supercilious demeanour and ludicrous "mode of speech" often inspired a feeling very opposite to that which he sought to excite. On professional points he constantly betrayed the grossest ignorance. By way of parading his power, and exhibiting his brief authority, he never lost an opportunity to *question* the claims and services of his superiors in intellect as well as in rank. And, in his legislative capacity, he ever voted *against* every "motion" or measure intended to benefit the Service, ameliorate the condition of the Seamen, or elevate the character of the Naval Officer.

Disappointed in promotion, Leatherlungs, shortly after the ship's return to Spithead, resigned his *premiership* of the "Little Liner." Not that he was wearied with the toils and cares of office; for he delighted in labour, fattened upon fag, and was wont to revel in all the *endearing* duties of stoning decks, stowing hammocks, squaring yards, clearing lighters, reefing topsails, and even "wearing ship with the watch and idlers"—no idle work of a wet and wintry night. But like nine-tenths of the *Sheet-anchor* class of the Service, the first lieutenant of the Nonsuch became disgusted and sickened to the very soul at the discouraging treatment—the callous, cold-hearted, and damning indifference—with which professional merit, unsupported by aristocratic *claims* and *political* pretensions, experienced in certain quarters.

At the suggestion, therefore, of his friend Lawrence, he took his leave of the "Little Liner," and forthwith proceeded on a "Hymenial cruise." At the Isle of Wight he "fell in with" the widow of a rich London stock broker, who, long accustomed to the roar of "bears and bulls," had determined to rusticate at Cowes. Here the lady was captivated by the vocal powers exhibited by Leatherlungs in "Cease rude Boreas." The lieutenant soon "owned the soft impeachment," but was at a loss how to pop the question. In this delicate difficulty, he

consulted his friend Lawrence, by letter, who, in his usual waggish way, despatched by return of post, the following

**"Recipe.**

"Take a walnut; carefully divide the shell; extract the kernel, and every particle of husk. Then dissolve a portion of isinglass, sufficient for the purpose of again adhering the parts of the shell. When your isinglass is ready, procure a hard crow-quill, out of which manufacture a finely pointed pen. Then cut from the best Bath paper a narrow slip, which when rolled up can be encased within the cavities of the shell. When ready, indite, with a steady and resolute hand, the lines underneath, taking care, when the slip is encased and the shell closed, to label without,

**"A NUT TO CRACK.**

"Leave the woes of widow'd life;  
He again a wedded wife;  
For he who gives thee this advice  
Is longing for the shortest splice."

It is needless to say more than that the chaplain's recipe soon produced the desired effect. In forty-eight hours from the presentation of the labelled nut, Leatherlungs became master and owner of the wealthy Mrs. Mash.

Should any of our readers be solicitous to learn the fate of Weatherley and "Pleasant Paul," it may be mentioned that the former, when serving as gunner of the largest of Her Majesty's hulks, in the harbour of Hamoaze, "Paid the debt o' natur"

on the first of February, 1838; and that Potter may be found, limping with an occasional touch of the "bago," within the walls of Greenwich Hospital. Of all the blue-stocking tribe pertaining to that truly talkative establishment, the boatswain of the Britannia Ward is universally allowed to possess the best tongue at a tale. The yarn of "THE WITHERED HAND AND BROKEN BIT" is constantly called for; and Paul's eulogisms of "Larking Larry" might be envied by the gravest prelate in the land. He often declares, were he "First Lord of the Admiralty, his first move would be to make Mr. Lawrence,

A reg'lar-built Bishop."

THE END.









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